

# USDA

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## Farm Service Agency

**Mecosta County  
USDA Service  
Center**

18260 Northland Dr  
Big Rapids, MI. 49307-9272

### County Committee

Mike Hopkins – Chairperson  
John Orr – Vice Chairperson  
Gerald Mondrella – Member  
Beth Storey – Advisor

### County Office Staff

Sherry Adams, Program Technician  
Towna Aris, Program Technician  
Shelley Lobert, Program Technician  
Heather Sellers, Program Technician (Intermittent)  
Larry Sheridan, Farm Loan Officer

### Farm Loan Manager

Rick Dean

### County Executive Director

Travis Murray

**Office Hours:** 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Monday – Friday  
Closed All Federal Holidays

## February 2008

### Field Reporter

Don Foos

## County Committee Election Results

Congratulations to Mike Hopkins! Mike was re-elected to represent producers from Big Rapids, Mecosta, Austin, Morton, Aetna, and Deerfield Townships on the Mecosta County Committee. He was re-elected to his 3rd term. The election results for Local Administrative Area #2 were:

Mike Hopkins— Elected to the County Committee (COC) Neil Van Aiken — 1st alternate to COC  
Don Lewis — 2nd alternate to COC

Others receiving votes were: Paul Wernette  
Thank you to all who voted and received votes.

### **\*\*\*CHANGE: DISASTER ASSISTANCE NOW AVAILABLE for 2007 (Entire Year!)**

Eligible ranchers and other livestock producers can apply to receive benefits under the Livestock Compensation Program (LCP) and the Crop Disaster Program (CDP) for 2005, 2006, and **all of 2007!!!**

LCP compensates livestock producers for pasture losses and/or feed losses occurring between January 1, 2005 and December 31, 2007, due to a natural disaster. Producers in primary counties declared secretarial disaster areas or certain counties declared presidential disaster areas between the above dates are eligible as are producers located in counties contiguous to those counties. Mecosta County had eligible disasters in 2005 & 2007.

CDP provides benefits to farmers who suffered quantity and quality losses on 2005, 2006, and **now 2007** crops due to natural disasters. All producers who incurred qualifying losses in time frames stated above may make applications for all crops that suffered losses. However, the producer will only receive benefits for the most beneficial year. Producers must have suffered quantity losses in excess of 35 percent and/or quality losses in excess of 25 percent to be eligible for CDP. **Only producers who obtained crop insurance coverage or coverage under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for the year of loss will be eligible for CDP benefits.**

## **EMERGENCY LOANS AVAILABLE**

Mecosta County and other surrounding county farmers who suffered significant damage due to drought in 2007 may be eligible for low-interest emergency loans from the Farm Service Agency if they are unable to get financing from any other source. These loans carry an interest rate of 3.75 percent. For production losses, eligible farmers can also use emergency loan funds to recover a portion of losses on growing crops that were destroyed. Loan applications will be accepted at our office through July 7, 2008 for losses caused by drought (Summer 2007). Please contact Rick Dean, FSA Farm Loan Manager, at (231) 796-2659 ext. 2.

Mecosta County FSA Office  
18260 Northland Drive  
Big Rapids, MI 49307

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### **FINAL DEADLINES and DATES to REMEMBER**

- \*February 12, 2008 Mecosta County Committee meeting at 9 a.m. at Mecosta Co. USDA Service Center
- \*February 18, 2008 Office Closed – Presidents Day
- \*March 5, 2008 Crop Disaster Information Meeting 10 A.M., Isabella County Building Room 320

### **Welcome!!**

Our office is honored to welcome Larry Sheridan to Mecosta County. Larry will be working in our office as a Farm Loan Officer Trainee. Please stop in and welcome Larry to our area.

### **Conservation Funding Opportunities**

If you are considering taking care of a conservation need or want to solve a problem that you have had to deal with the last several years, now may be your opportunity to address that concern. The Environmental Quality Incentive Program has technical and financial assistance available to assist in implementing conservation practices. These are just a few of the opportunities:

- Water Quality (Storage of Pesticide and Fertilizer, nutrient management and pesticide management)
- Grazing Management (seedings, fence, brush management, water access and rotational grazing)
- Control Soil Erosion (waterways, cover crops, diversion, residue management, heavy use area protection or conservation buffers)
- Water Efficiency (plate cooler water recycling, irrigation scheduling and irrigation system evaluations)
- Animal Waste Concerns (developing a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan, Waste Storage Facility, Composting Facility, Manure Transfer or Closure of Waste Impoundments)
- Fish and Wildlife Habitat (conservation cover, forest stand improvement, tree and shrub planting or shelterbelt/windbreak)

Now is your chance. Take advantage of the opportunities. Contact your local USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service District Conservationist Jennifer Taylor to develop a conservation plan (231) 796-2659 ext. 3.

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