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*Mecosta County
USDA Service
Center*

18260 Northland Dr
Big Rapids, MI. 49307-9272
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County Committee

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

Office Personnel

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

Farm Loan Manager

Rick Dean

County Executive Director

Travis Murray

Field Reporter

Don Foos

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Monday – Friday
Closed All Federal Holidays

June 2008

FINAL DEADLINES and DATES to REMEMBER

- ***July 4, 2008** -Office Closed for Independence Day
- ***July 18, 2008** –Final date to apply for the Livestock Compensation and Livestock Indemnity Programs
- ***August 1, 2008** – Nominations Deadline for Farm Service Agency County Committee Member who will represent Local Administrative Area #3 (Martiny, Sheridan, Wheatland, Hinton, Millbrook)
- ***August 15, 2008** -Producers **must certify** all crops

Please Come in and Tell us what You have Planted

Producers are reminded that crop acreage reporting continues to play an important role through the FSA Offices and RMA Offices. Certification of crop acreages is needed to maintain farm history which may determine eligibility in future farm programs including the Conservation programs administered by FSA. Acreage reports must be filed timely. The deadline is

August 15th for all crops. Planting dates are also a requirement at the time of acreage reporting.

- Call today for an appointment -



Livestock Compensation Program

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has announced that livestock producers have until **July 18, 2008**, to enroll in the 2005 - 2007 Livestock Compensation Program (LCP). LCP compensates livestock producers for feed losses or pasture losses occurring between January 1, 2005 and December 31, 2007, due to a natural disaster. Mecosta County had eligible disasters in 2005 and 2007 for drought.

The following animals **may be considered “eligible livestock”**: certain adult and non-adult dairy cattle, beef cattle, buffalo, beefalo, equine, sheep, goats, deer, elk, swine, reindeer, and poultry, including egg-producing poultry that on the beginning date of the applicable disaster period were all of the following. To be eligible these animals must have been: 1) physically located in an eligible disaster county 2) maintained for commercial use as part of the participant’s farming operation 3) owned or cash leased 4) not have been produced or maintained for reasons other than commercial use as part of a farming operation. **Livestock that are not eligible** for 2005-2007 LCP include, **but are not limited to the following**: A) Livestock produced or maintained for reasons other than commercial use as part of a farming operation, including, but not limited to recreational, purposes such as consumption by the owner, hunting, pets, pleasure, roping, show, etc... B) emus C) yaks D) ostriches E) llamas F) all beef and dairy cattle, and buffalo and beefalo that weighed less than 500 pounds on the beginning of the applicable disaster period, as provided at <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov> G) any wild free roaming livestock, including horses and deer H) any animals not included in the eligible livestock list.

An eligible livestock producer for 2005-2007 LCP is one who meets all of the following:

- 1) had eligible livestock physically located in an eligible disaster county on the beginning date of the county's disaster period
- 2) had legal ownership of or cash leased, but not both for the same livestock, eligible livestock on the beginning date of the applicable disaster periods, as provided at <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>
- 3) suffered grazing loss on eligible grazing lands physically located in an eligible disaster county where the forage was damaged or destroyed by an eligible disaster event and intended for use as feed for the participant's eligible livestock
- 4) suffered a loss of feed from forage or feed stuffs physically located in an eligible disaster county that was mechanically harvested and intended for use as feed for the participant's eligible livestock that was damaged or destroyed after harvest by an eligible disaster event
- 5) suffered a loss of feed from purchased forage or feed stuffs physically located in an eligible disaster county that was intended for use as feed of the participant's eligible livestock that was damaged or destroyed after harvest by an eligible disaster event
- 6) suffered increased feed cost incurred in an eligible disaster county because of an eligible disaster event to feed for the participant's eligible livestock.

The producer must also be a citizen of or legal resident alien in the United States including farm cooperative, private domestic corporations, partnership, or joint operation in which a majority interest is held by members, stockholders, or partners who are citizens of, or legal resident aliens in, the United States, if such cooperative corporation, partnership, or joint operation owned, jointly owned, or cash leased the livestock on the beginning date of the applicable disaster period, Native American tribe as defined in the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, Native American organization or entity chartered under the Indian Reorganization Act, or any economic enterprise under the Indian Financing Act of 1974.

An \$80,000 payment limitation applies to each "person" for benefits received under 2005-2007 LCP. Individuals and entities exceeding \$2.5 million Adjusted Gross Income are not eligible for payment under the 2005-2007 LCP.

Mecosta County Committee Nomination/Election



It's Farm Service Agency County Committee nomination time for Mecosta County. Since this only happens once a year, here is a nomination refresher. For election purposes, counties are divided into *local administrative areas* (LAA). Each LAA contributes one producer to serve a three-year term on the County Committee. This year the Mecosta County Committee member from LAA #3 is being elected. LAA #3 represents the following Mecosta County Townships: **Martiny, Sheridan, Wheatland, Millbrook, and Hinton**. Summary of rules for nominating candidates:

- 1) Nominations for candidates to run for the Farm Service Agency County Committee election representing producers in a Local Administrative Area will be accepted from June 15 through August 1, 2008.
- 2) Producers who are residents in the LAA holding the election and who participate or cooperate in an FSA program *and* are of *legal voting age* may be nominated to serve on the County Committee.
- 3) Individuals may nominate themselves or others as candidates. Also, organizations representing socially disadvantaged minorities and women farmers or ranchers may also nominate candidates.
- 4) Forms and details may be picked up at the county office or downloaded from the Michigan FSA Web site. Simply go to <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mi> and click on the "Vote, Make a Difference" graphic.
- 5) Eligible voters can nominate as many candidates as they wish.
- 6) To be valid, the nomination form must be signed by the person being nominated, indicating agreement to serve if elected, and returned to the FSA county office by the close of business on August 1, 2008, or postmarked by midnight August 1, 2008.

The county committee election is held by mail. Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning November 3, 2008 and must be returned to the FSA county office by the close of business on December 1, 2008 or postmarked by midnight December 1, 2008.

CONSERVATION SECURITY PROGRAM (CSP)

Information will be coming your way regarding CSP that will be available to Mecosta County farmers in the future. It is now time to become aware and prepare ourselves for the financial benefits this program will offer. This program:

- * Is a Voluntary Program
- * Rewards Those Practicing Conservation and Environmental Management
- * Supports Ongoing Land Stewardship
- * Provides Payments for Maintaining and Enhancing Natural Resources

Conservation records will be needed as part of the eligibility. Plan ahead by reviewing where you are at with your records and land stewardship. Watch the mail, newspapers and farm magazines that address this program. Additional information is available from the Mecosta County Natural Resources Conservation Service District Conservationist Jennifer Taylor at (231) 796-2659 ext. 3 or on the web at www.mi.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/.

PLEASE HELP US HELP YOU!!!

Have you bought, sold, picked up or dropped rented land from your operation, or moved land into another's entity's name (such as a trust, corporation, etc...). If you have made these types of changes, it is your responsibility to make our office aware that these changes have been made. Please notify us if you have any questions or concerns. Failure to maintain accurate records with FSA on all land you have an interest in can lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties. Update signature authorization when changes in the operation occur. **NOW** is the time to notify our office of these changes.



SHOULD YOU GET CROP INSURANCE OR NAP COVERAGE?

This Crop Disaster Program (CDP) produced a significant shift in eligibility for crop disaster payments. Now for a producer to be eligible for a CDP payment, the producer must have some type of crop insurance or **Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)** coverage on the crop which had a loss. To get crop insurance, please call a crop insurance company. If an insurance company will not insure a crop for Mecosta County, get a statement from that company in writing and bring it to the Farm Service Agency. You will then be eligible to purchase a NAP policy through the FSA. To get NAP, the producer must pay a nonrefundable service fee in an amount that is equal to the lesser of \$100 per crop per administrative county; or \$300 per producer per administrative county, but not to exceed \$900 per producer. We encourage you to look at crop insurance and NAP to protect your farming interest in the future.

FOREIGN LANDOWNER NOTIFICATION

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA. Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, real estate agents, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

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



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Loans Available for Beginning Farmers, Socially Disadvantaged

FSA is authorized to assist beginning farmers and or members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these programs, the FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person whom:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial FSA management program
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's median size.

Entity members must meet the eligibility requirements. Loan approval is not guaranteed. Socially disadvantaged groups are Hispanics, American Indians, African Americans, Asians, Pacific Islanders, and women.

Rural Youth Loans

FSA makes operating loans to individual rural youths age 10 through 20 to establish and operate income producing projects. These projects must be of modest size and be initiated, developed, carried out by rural youths participating in 4-H Clubs, FFA, or a similar organization or with a vocational teacher or county extension agent. The project must be an organized and supervised program of work. It must be planned and operated with the assistance of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan, and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. Contact Rick Dean, Farm Loan Manager, for more details.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its program and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of Discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.