



July 2008

Montcalm County News

2008 Crop Reporting

The acreage reporting deadline is **August 15, 2008** for hay, CRP, corn, fall small grains, soybeans, fruits, vegetables, and idle ground. This deadline is typically July 15th; the change is for 2008 only.

Producers are required to report all of their cropland, including the field planting date, in order to qualify for several program benefits. These benefits include:

- Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) payments
- Commodity Loans and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP)
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Annual Rental Payments
- Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Payments

Direct and Counter- Cyclical Program (DCP) for 2008

FSA has announced the sign-up for the 2008 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) with a deadline of September 30, 2008. This has been typically June 1st.

NEW Rule

Farms having base acres of 10.0 acres or less cannot be approved for payment.

Note:

The exception is farms wholly owned by:

1. Socially Disadvantaged (SDA)
2. Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher

Farm Loans Available

FSA offers farm loans for operations that are unable to obtain commercial financing. The loans available include farm ownership loans, operating loans and youth loans. All loans have a fixed interest rate.

Farm ownership loans are available to purchase (not refinance) land. The maximum loan amount is \$300,000 with terms up to 40 years.

Some examples of uses for annual operating loans include, crop inputs and feed. These have a maximum term of 18 months.

Term operating loans can be used for purchasing machinery, equipment and livestock with a maximum term of 7 years. A total of \$300,000 is available for operating loans.

Youth loans are available to youth between the ages of 10 and 20. These loans are available to FFA, 4-H or other such organized agricultural participants. These loans can be used to purchase livestock, equipment, supplies, tools or operating expenses for the project. The loan cannot exceed \$5,000. Repayment of the loan is individually tailored to the specific project

For more information please contact Sara Possehn at the Ionia Farm Service Agency (616) 527-2098.



**Montcalm County
USDA Service Center**

**Montcalm County FSA
77 S. State St.
Stanton, MI 48888**

(989) 831-4212 (phone)

(989) 831- 4540 (fax)

Website

www.fsa.usda.gov/mi

Hours

Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

County Committee

Eugene Rentschler
Ned Welder
Judy Johnston
Mary Waldron - Advisor

County Committee meets
2nd Thursday

Staff

Janice McCallister
Becky Proctor
Pam Brooks

Field Reporter

Ken Carr

County Executive Director

Wayne Stickler

Farm Loan Manager

John Anton

Farm Record Changes

It is important to keep your farm records up to date by reporting any changes in your farming operation to our office. Also, please let our office know if you have changed banks, as this causes a delay in you receiving payments timely.

Farm Reconstitutions

In program terminology, farms are *constituted* to group all tracts having the same owner and the same operator under one farm serial number. When changes in ownership or operation take place, a farm *reconstitution* is necessary.

The reconstitution — or recon — is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation.

Remember, to be effective for the current year, recons must be requested by Aug. 1 for farms enrolled in the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program.

If DCP direct payments have already been issued on a particular farm, the reconstitution will be effective for the next year, unless the payments are refunded.

Maintaining CRP Cover

CRP cover maintenance is the participant's responsibility and must be done according to the conservation plan.

All CRP maintenance activity, such as mowing, burning and spraying, must be conducted outside the primary nesting season for wildlife and in accordance with the Conservation plan. The ending date for the primary nesting season for wildlife in Michigan is August 1st.

Continuous CRP (CCRP)

The Continuous Conservation Reserve Program is a private lands environmental improvement program. The Continuous CRP program is a voluntary enrollment program. In return, the landowners will receive annual rental and maintenance payments, incentive payments for certain activities, and cost share for establishment.

To be eligible for enrollment in the Continuous CRP, participants and acreage must meet certain requirements. Provided the eligibility requirements are met, FSA will automatically accept enrollments of acreage into Continuous CRP.

Landowners may enroll in the program at any time during the year.

Crop Disaster Program 2005 -2007

Eligible farmers can sign-up for the Crop Disaster Program (CDP) if they suffered **quantity** and (or) **quality** losses to **2005, 2006 or 2007** crops from natural disasters.

Producers who incurred qualifying losses in 2005, 2006 or 2007 must choose only one year to apply for benefits. Producers may apply for benefits for losses to multiple commodities as long as the losses occurred in the same crop year.

Note:

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.

Producers must have suffered quantity losses in excess of 35 percent or quality losses in excess of 25 percent to be eligible for CDP.

Farm Service Agency Designates 60 Michigan Counties Agriculture Disaster Areas

This includes Montcalm County as a natural disaster area due to storms with tornadoes, hail, and high winds that occurred from June 6 through June 15, 2008. Farmers in Montcalm County have until February 25, 2009, to apply for the loans to help cover part of their losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merit, taking into account the extent of loss, ability to obtain other credit, security available and repayment ability.

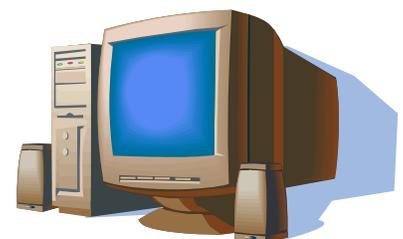
For more information please contact John Anton at the Ionia Farm Service Agency (616) 527-2098.

\$\$ FOR CARBON CREDITS

Have you heard about the Michigan Conservation and Climate Initiative (MCCI)? This program pays producers for using conservation tillage and grass or tree plantings. Please contact Judy Cloer (989) 831-4212 Ext. 3.at the Montcalm Conservation District.

Dates to Remember	
August 15 th	Crop Reporting Ends
Sept. 1 st	Office Closed
Sept. 16 th	SURE Fee Deadline
Sept. 30 th	DCP Sign-up Ends
Continues	Farm Storage Facility Loans
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve Program

Visit our Web site at:
www.fsa.usda.gov/mi



New Disaster Assistance Programs

Funds may be used to make payments under the following 5 new continuous disaster assistance programs:

- **Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program**
- **Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP)**
- **Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)**
- **Tree Assistance Program (TAP)**
- **Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish (EALHF) Program.**

The **SURE** Program will be available to eligible producers on:

1. Farms in disaster counties, including contiguous counties that have incurred crop production losses and/or crop quality losses during the crop year.

Note: Disaster counties are counties included in the geographic area covered by a qualifying natural disaster declaration that is declared by the Secretary for production losses under the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, Section 321 (a).

2. Any farm in which, during the calendar year, the total loss of production of the farm because of weather is greater than 50 percent of the normal production of the farm. In general, “**farm**” means the sum of **all** crop acreage in **all** counties that is planted or intended to be planted for harvest by the eligible producer.

To be considered to have obtained at least the minimum level of insurance under SURE, TAP, or ELAP, a producer **must** obtain a plan of insurance with not less than 50 percent yield coverage at 55 percent of the insurable price for each crop grazed, planted, or intended to be planted for harvest on a whole farm. According to the Risk management Purchase Requirement, producers are required to timely purchase, at a minimum, CAT and/or NAP coverage for **all** crops to be eligible for SURE, TAP, and ELAP.

- **All insurable crops** on the farm (this includes hay), a policy or plan of insurance under the Federal Crop Insurance Act

- Noninsurable Assistance Program (NAP) commodity(s) on the farm by filing the required paperwork and paying the assistance fee by the applicable State deadline.

Note: For 2008 only, producers who do **not** meet this requirement may have this provision waived if the producers pay a fee in an amount applicable to the noninsured crop disaster assistance program fee or catastrophic risk protection plan fee by no later than **September 16, 2008**.

Should You Get Crop Insurance or NAP Coverage?

The above Crop Disaster Programs (CDP) produced a significant shift in eligibility for crop disaster payments for 2008 through 2012. Now for a producer to be eligible for a CDP payment, the producer must have Crop Insurance coverage from a private crop insurance agent or uninsurable crop coverage (NAP) from FSA for **all crops** intended for mechanical or grazing harvest. The fees for the NAP coverage in years 2009 – 2012, are \$250.00 per crop per county not to exceed \$750.00 total per county, and not to exceed \$1,875.00 per producer for all counties.

For producers to be eligible for assistance under **LFP**, producers **must** obtain a plan of insurance or file the required paperwork and pay the administrative fee by the applicable State application closing date for NAP for the **grazing land** incurring losses for which assistance is being requested.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency
Montcalm County FSA Office
77 South State St.
Stanton, MI 48888-9469

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Wetland Compliance

If you plan on clearing, draining, dredging or tile maintenance of any kind, you need to file an AD-1026 with our office before you begin. Failure to do so could result in the loss of USDA benefits.

Sodbuster Regulations

The term “sodbusting” is used to identify the plowing up of erosion-prone grasslands for use as cropland. Sodbuster violations are unauthorized tillage practices on highly erodible lands that converted native vegetation such as rangeland or woodland, to crop production after Dec. 23, 1985.

Farmers and ranchers should be aware that if they use highly erodible land for crop production without proper conservation measures, they risk losing eligibility to participate in Farm Service Agency programs.

Before producers clear, plow or otherwise prepare areas not presently under crop production for planting, they are required to file an AD-1026, indicating the area to be brought into production.

If Natural Resources Conservation Service indicates on a CPA-026 that the area will be highly erodible land, the producer will be required to develop and implement a conservation plan on the affected acreage, before bringing land into production.

Preventing Fraud

The Farm Service Agency has joined with the Risk Management Agency to prevent fraud, waste and abuse in the Federal Crop Insurance Program. FSA has been, and will continue to, assist RMA and insurance providers by monitoring crop conditions throughout the growing season. In addition, FSA will refer all suspected cases of fraud, waste and abuse to RMA. Producers can report suspected cases to the county office staff, RMA office, or the Office of the Inspector General.

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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.