



August 2008



Mason-Oceana-Lake-Manistee County News

USDA Service Center

Mason-Oceana-Lake-
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Hours

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

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www.fsa.usda.gov



2008 Annual Direct Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) Information.

Sign up for the 2008 DCP *began* and will run through 9-30-08. The 2008

Farm Bill provides a continuation of the DCP program for 2008. The base acres that were in effect in 2007 will be in effect for 2008 and payments will be computed on 85% of the base acres. The Direct payment rates are:

- Corn - \$.28/bu.
- Soybeans - \$.44/bu
- Wheat - \$.52/bu

One change is that the new Farm Bill prohibits direct payments to farms if the base acres are 10 acres or less, unless you are a socially disadvantaged farmer or limited resource farmer.

Prior to sign-up:

- Report any farm changes - report any farming operation changes so that we can keep your record current. This includes changes in landownership or operators.
- If the land in your operation hasn't changed, do you have a signed lease from the landowner?
- A signed rental agreement or the landowner's signature on the DCP Contract is required.
- All farmers who produce a crop on the base acres are entitled to share in the DCP payment. Landowners who do not have an interest in the crop are not eligible to receive a DCP payment.

- Plan to update your payment limitation documents and other program eligibility records if you haven't.
- Reconstitutions – changes that require farm reconstitutions should be reported as soon as possible so we can update your records. Farm divisions should be considered when you do not have a firm lease. We cannot enroll a farm with changes pending, so please let us know of your changes well before your appointment to sign up.

Supplemental Disaster Assistance Programs for 2008

The 2008 Farm Bill appropriated for Supplemental Disaster Programs

- SURE – Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments
- Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP)
- Tree Assistance Program (TAP)
- Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm Raised Fish (ELAP)
- Livestock indemnity Program (LIP)

For producers to be eligible they must purchase at least the CAT level of crop insurance for all insurable crops and/or NAP coverage for non-insurable crops. Sales closing dates have passed for 2008. However, farmers may obtain a waiver for 2008 only; by paying an administrative fee of \$100 per crop not to exceed \$300 for the county or \$900 total for all counties. This buy in fee is non-refundable and must be paid no later than **September 16, 2008.**

Contact office for more details.



Deadline to Report Crop Acreages Extended to August 15, 2008.

Acreage reporting time is here. Please remember that filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs. Producers are required to report their planted crops and acres to FSA in order to maintain eligibility for several program benefits:

- Direct Counter-Cyclical Program
- Commodity Loans and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs)
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Annual Rental Payments
- Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Payments

The deadline to report fall-seeded small grains and all spring seeded crops is August 15, 2008.



Crop reports on Form FSA-578, Report of Commodities must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. We have mailed out a list of all the farms our records show the producer is associated with. Producers can make an appointment to stop in and sign them or have them mailed to them for signing and then return them to the office by the deadline. This process helps shorten the time the producer spends in the office.

Appointments Recommended

We recommend you call to make an appointment before coming to the office to conduct business. This will enable us to prepare any necessary paperwork and research issues before your appointment. We realize how important your time is, and this will reduce the amount of time that you have to wait in the office



Conservation Reserve Program Mowing Maintenance

Producers that have covers established, will need to follow the maintenance requirements in your plan. Check for weeds early this summer and request permission to **spot mow** or spray to control weeds, especially before they go to seed. Thistles are a problem and it is better to spray them rather than mow.

CRP Regular mowing may take place between August 1 and August 20. This short time span is to allow adequate re-growth for winter cover & not to disturb the ground nesting wildlife during the primary nesting season of April 1 thru July 31.

CRP-Mid Contract Management

Means having NRCS determine if any actions are needed on your part to improve the CRP cover. CRP cover may benefit from light disking, grass-specific herbicides, interseeding with legumes or wildflowers, or prescribed burning. Cost share is available for these actions

FSA Farm Loans

FSA makes both direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans to family-size farmers who can not obtain commercial credit from a bank or other lender. FSA loans can be used to purchase land, livestock equipment, feed, seed, and supplies. The loans can also be used to construct buildings or make farm improvements. If you're having trouble getting commercial credit, check with the county office staff about eligibility, as well as maximum loan amounts, rates, term and use of proceeds.

Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL)

With the volatility of commodity prices having the ability to store your grain, instead of selling directly out of the field, offers you many more options in marketing your crops. Loans to erect new storage facilities are available at the attractive interest rate of 3.625% during the month of July. These loans require a 15 percent down payment and are for a term of seven years.



Conservation Reserve Program State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)

Owners and operators of cropland in Mason, Lake, Oceana, and Manistee counties may enroll eligible land in a new continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) practice called SAFE which creates a native pollinator habitat planting that consists of native shrubs, grasses and/or wildflowers providing cover, nectar, and pollen for native pollinators.

The sign-up for SAFE is underway and will continue until 2,500 acres are enrolled in the target area. Through continuous CRP USDA accepts offers by producers, provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements. Producers within a SAFE area can submit offers to voluntarily enroll acres in CRP contracts for a 10-15 year period. In exchange, producers receive annual CRP rental payments, incentives and cost-share assistance to establish habitat.

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible land must meet basic CRP eligibility requirements. Eligible land is cropland that was planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity during four of the six years from 1996 to 2001 or be part of a working orchard. The land must be physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity.



Required Management Practices

Through SAFE, producers create habitat that is beneficial to the target high-priority wildlife species. This may involve planting grasses, forbs, shrubs or other species that help restore or improve wildlife habitat. CCC requires that practices under SAFE be managed during the life of the contract. The management requirements are tailored to the individual practice. Fishing and hunting are allowed on CRP-enrolled land, including SAFE. As with other conservation practices and programs under CRP, certain restrictions apply.

Rental & Incentive Payments

Rental rates are based on the average value of cash rented dryland adjusted to reflect the relative productivity of the particular soil type. The individual soil rentals are available at the local FSA service center. While acceptance is not determined by a competitive offer process, producers may elect to receive an amount less than the maximum payment rate. In addition to the payments described above, CCC will pay up to 90 percent of the eligible cost of establishing the native pollinator habitat.

USDA will also provide an up-front, one-time CRP Signing Incentive Payment (CRP-SIP) of \$100 per acre, which is made after the contract is approved.



Crop Disaster Program 2005-2007

CDP has been expanded to provide benefits for losses suffered in 2005, 2006, or 2007. Producers must choose only one year to receive benefits. Only producers who purchased crop insurance or Non Insured Assistance Program coverage for the year of loss will be eligible for CDP benefits. Losses must have exceeded 35%. The payment rate is set at 42% of normal price. Producers who have already received benefits for 2005 or 2006 can file an application for 2007 losses. If losses were greater in 2007 additional benefits will be paid.

The CDP now provides benefits to farmers who suffered *quality* losses (as well as quantity losses) from natural disaster and related conditions to 2005, 2006 or 2007 crops. Contact the office for further details.

Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

Policy holders are reminded that they must submit a "*Notice of Loss*" (FSA-576) within 15 days of when the loss becomes apparent. If you have noticed that your crop might be light due to the frosts or hail that we had this spring, contact the office so that we have the opportunity to take a look at your crop. For those of you that have filed a notice of loss, you need to keep us informed of your harvest decisions. If you are not going to harvest all or part of a block, an appraisal will need to be completed on that block. This appraisal will be used in calculating your loss claim.

Remember we need to know the amount of crop sold from previous years in order to establish your actual production history (APH). Your APH is used to calculate your loss payment. This production evidence must be supplied to the COF by July 15th.

Bank Account Changes

All FSA payments are to be made by direct deposit unless there is a financial hardship to prevent it. Producers need to notify us when accounts change to prevent a delay in payments.



SPECIAL ACCOMODATIONS

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact this County Office in person or by phone.

Loans Available for Beginning Farmers, Socially Disadvantaged

FSA is authorized to assist beginning farmers and members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmers 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 management program sponsored by FSA. Does not own a farm in excess of 30% of the county's median size.

Real Estate for Sale Visit the following web site for government owned farms, houses, lots & buildings.
<http://www.resales.usda.gov>

Dates to Remember

August 1 st	COC Nomination Petition Deadline
August 15 th	Crop Reporting Ends
Sept. 1st	Office Closed for the observance of Labor day
Sept 16 th	Final date apply for Disaster Assistance Program "buy-in" waiver
Sept. 30 th	DCP Sign-up Ends
Sept.30 th	Deadline to purchase NAP coverage for Alfalfa, Mixed Forage, Rye and Mint
Continues	Farm Storage Facility Loans
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve Program

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

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