



January 2008

Mason-Oceana-Lake-Manistee County News

USDA Service Center

Mason-Oceana-Lake-
Manistee County FSA
655 N. Scottville Rd.
Scottville, MI 49454-9569
231-757-3707 (phone)
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Hours
Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Office Staff
Kathi Lerg, CED
Debbie Schulz, PT
Beth Areklet, PT
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Farm Loan Manager
Rick Dean, FLM

County Committee
Eric Herrygers, Chairman
John LaPointe, V. Chairman
Curtiss Berndt
James Bush
Chuck Schade

Advisor
Shirley Mallison

Website
www.fsa.usda.gov

FSA for Kids

www.fsa.usda.gov/fsakids

www.fs4jk.org

County Committee Election Results

Congratulations to **John LaPointe** and **Curtiss Berndt**. John was re-elected to represent farmers from All of Lake County plus Meade, Sheridan, Branch and Logan Townships in Mason County. Curtiss was re-elected to represent farmers from All of Manistee County plus Grant, Free Soil, Sherman and Victory Townships in Mason County.

FSA appreciates all of the voters for taking the time to complete the election ballot. The County Committee system works only because of your participation.

The Committee members held their organizational meeting on January 8, 2008 to determine who will serve as the County Committee Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The results are as follows:

Eric Herrygers – Chairperson
John LaPointe - Vice Chairperson
Curtiss Berndt - Member
Charles Schade – Member
James Bush - Member

Crop Disaster Program

There has been a recent change to the 2005-2007 Crop Disaster Program (CDP). Originally only 2007 crops planted prior to February 28, 2007 that were covered by either Federal Crop Insurance or NAP were eligible for payment.

The recent change will allow producers to apply for assistance on all 2007 crops planted before December 31, 2007 that were covered by either Federal Crop Insurance or NAP coverage in 2007. This does not include wheat planted in the fall of 2007 for harvest in 2008.

2008 NAP Coverage Deadlines

The final deadline for 2008 Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage on all annually planted crops is **March 15, 2008**.

Continuous coverage is still available for all 2007 NAP Participants that covered only annually planted crops. If you were a NAP participant in 2007 and wish to cover the same crop(s) for 2008 it is possible to sign up without making a trip to the office. Just mail your payment in for the amount listed on your continuous coverage letter before the final application deadline and your crops will be covered for the 2008 crop year.

For those wishing to enroll in the program, or those needing to make changes to their crop coverage, please contact the office in Scottville at (231) 757-3707 ext. 2 as soon as possible.

March is also the deadline to purchase Federal Crop Insurance on oats, barley, corn and soybeans in Mason Oceana, Lake and Manistee counties. Insurance is also available for green beans in Mason and Oceana counties. Please contact your private insurance provider for details.

Important Reminder: You must report NAP losses within 15 days after the loss occurs or is apparent. Losses are not considered reported until you have completed, signed and filed the CCC-576 “Notice of Loss” at the County Office. Failure to comply will result in denial of your 2008 NAP benefits.



Farm Storage Facility Loans

Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL) are available on the following types of new facilities and upgrades: conventional type cribs or bins, handling and drying equipment, flat type storage structures, oxygen-limiting and other upright silo type structures, and bunker-type, horizontal or open silo structures.

A producer must demonstrate a storage need based on the producer's 3 year average acreage and production minus any current storage available.

A 15% cash down payment is required; therefore, the loan is limited to 85% of the net cost up to \$100,000. Loans exceeding \$50,000 require a real estate lien. The loan term is 7 years and is repaid in equal amortized installments.

A loan is not disbursed until the facility has been built and inspected. FSFL are available year round.

The current January FSFL interest rate is 3.625%.



Commodity Loans Available

2007 crop Commodity Loans are available on wheat, oats, barley and honey until March 31, 2008, and corn and soybeans until May 31, 2008.

To be eligible for a loan a producer must have beneficial interest in the commodity, have a 2007 FSA-578, Report of Acreage on file, and comply with Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions.

Loans mature on the last day of the 9th month following the month in which the loan is approved. A non-recourse loan may be paid off by delivering the pledged collateral to the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), or by repaying the loan during the loan period.

The two types of commodity loans are farm-stored and warehouse stored. Farm-stored loan quantities can be certified or a measurement service can be performed at your cost. Warehouse stored loans require a warehouse certificate with storage paid.

The current January interest rate is 4.25%.

WOOL AND MOHAIR PRODUCERS

Wool and Mohair Producers are reminded to complete a CCC-633 EZ form **prior to losing beneficial interest**. **March 15** is the cut off date to apply for Wool and Mohair LDP's.

Livestock Compensation Program

Producers suffering grazing losses in 2007 due to drought in Mason, Oceana, Lake and Manistee Counties may now apply for assistance under the Livestock Compensation Program (LCP). Please contact the office for more information.

Conservation District Tree Sale

MASON – LAKE - Orders are being taken now through early April for the Annual Seedling Sale with distribution day scheduled for Friday, April 18th and Saturday, April 19th. Call the District Office at 231-757-3708 x3 for an order form or assistance in species selection and/or planting information.

MANISTEE – Orders are being taken through April 4th for the Annual Seedling Sale with the distribution taking place on Friday, April 18th and Saturday, April 19th at the Urka “Strawberry” Farm. Call the District Office at 231-889-4761 or visit their web sit at www.manisteedc.org for an order form or assistance in species selection and/or planting information.

OCEANA- Orders are being taken through April 1st for the Annual Seeding Sale. Order forms will also be available in the Oceana Herald Journal. Pickup date will be April 19th from 8:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

Conservation District Annual Meeting

MASON-LAKE –The Mason-Lake CD 66th Annual Meeting will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 1st at the Mason County Fin & Feather Club in Scottville. Breakfast will be followed by a presentation by Chris Frederick of the US Forest Service about his experience with forestry assistance through the Peace Corps in Ghana, West Africa. The morning meeting will also include an awards presentation and distribution of door prizes. Call the District Office at 231-757-3708 x3 for more information or to purchase tickets.

OCEANA –The Oceana CD Annual Meeting will be held on March 15th and will be a breakfast meeting. Tentative location will be at the Hart Methodist Church. Call the District Office for more information at 231-861-4967

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Direct Deposit Updates

All payments issued from this office are **required** to be made by Direct Deposit into your bank account. Please remember to notify us when you change banks or account numbers. Failure to do so will result in your payment being sent somewhere you don't want it to be!

Foreign Landowners Reporting Requirement

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% of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify investors of these reporting requirements.



Reporting Changes

It is important to remember to contact the office with any records changes that may have occurred. These changes would include, but are not limited to:

- Development – any new parcels of land removed for houses needs to be reported.
- Owner/Operator Changes – report any changes land ownership, tenants or crop share arrangements.
- Reconstitutions – changes that require farm or tract combinations or divisions due to sale of and/or purchase of land, or change in operators, should be reported as soon as possible.
- Farm Operating Plan - any changes to the farming operation that may have an effect on “person” and/or “actively engaged determination

Attention Producer, Landowners!

- Do you intend to clear timber areas to create or to expand existing crop areas?
- Are you converting a pasture field into a crop field?
- Are there any areas on your farm(s) that you are considering cropping that have not been cropped in recent years?
- Is there a wet spot in a field that you want to drain to make cropping easier?
- Are you disturbing a wildlife habitat area of any type?
- Are you doing anything different on your farm(s) this year?

These are Highly Erodible and Wetlands provision questions that need to be considered each year by producers to assure that they may remain eligible for USDA benefits. If you have any questions or concerns that something you plan to do on your farm could jeopardize your eligibility for benefits, please contact your NRCS representative before you begin work.

Special Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact the county FSA office staff directly or by phone at (231) 757-3707 ext. 2.

Office Policy-Appointments

In order to provide better service to producers, we are asking that you call for an appointment when completing an application, providing records, certifying acreage, etc. This will allow us to make sure that we have the necessary records ready for you, and should expedite your visit. Thanks for your cooperation!



PRESORTED STANDARD
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID
 LANSING, MI
 PERMIT # 19

Simple Thought...

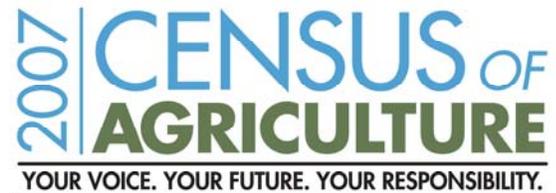
*Happiness is an attitude.
 We either make ourselves miserable,
 Or happy and strong. The amount of
 Work is the same...*

Author unknown

Dates to Remember	
Feb 14 th	9:00 AM-County Committee Meeting
Feb 18 th	Washington's Birthday-Office Closed
March 15 th	Deadline to purchase NAP coverage and Federal Crop Insurance on annually planted crops.
March 31 st	Deadline for 2007 Commodity Loans on wheat, oats, barley and honey.
May 31 st	Deadline for 2007 Commodity Loans on corn and soybeans.
June 30 th	Acreage Report Deadline-Small Grains
July 15 th	Acreage Report Deadline
Continues	Continuous CRP
Continues	Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

2007 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

Report forms for the 2007 Census of Agriculture were mailed to farm and ranch operators on December 28, 2007 to collect data for the 2007 calendar year. Completed forms are due by February 4, 2008. Producers can return their forms by mail or, for the first time, they have the option of filling out the Census online via a secure web site.



NASS will release Census data, in both electronic and print formats, beginning in February 2009. Detailed reports will be published for all counties, states and the nation.

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.