



COVERED BRIDGE COURIER

St. Joseph County FSA
693 E. Main Street
Centreville, MI 49032
269-467-6336, EXT 2
269-467-4356 FAX

www.fsa.usda.gov
www.sc.egov.usda.gov

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

County Committee
Daniel Sharp, Chairman
James Struble, Vice Chairman
Timothy Wagner, Member
Ann Kauffman, Advisor

Staff
Robert Avery, FA
Gayle Britten, PT, FA
Phillip DeYoung, FLM
Michelle Fambro, PT
Carol Fetterolf, PT
Sharon Hoch, CED
Dana Sherman, PT

DATES TO REMEMBER IN 2008:

- February 18 - Office closed for Presidents' Day.
March 15 - Sales closing date for crop insurance on barley, canning beans, corn, oats, popcorn, seed corn, soybeans.
March 15 - Deadline to purchase non-insured crop disaster assistance program coverage for spring-seeded vegetables.
March 31 - Final date to apply for 2007-crop barley, oats and wheat loans and loan deficiency payments.
May 26 - Office closed for Memorial Day.
May 31 - Final date to apply for 2007-crop corn, grain sorghum, soybean loans and loan deficiency payments.



2007 CROP, LIVESTOCK, AND LIVESTOCK FEED LOSSES NOW ELIGIBLE FOR DISASTER ASSISTANCE

The Crop Disaster Program, Livestock Compensation Program, and Livestock Indemnity Program have been expanded to include crop, livestock, and livestock feed losses that occurred before December 31, 2007.

2005-2007 Crop Disaster Program (CDP)

To receive CDP benefits for quantity losses the producer must have been prevented from planting a crop, sustained a loss in excess of 35% of the expected production of a crop, or sustained a loss in excess of 35% of the value for value-loss crops.

Only producers who obtain crop insurance or noninsured crop disaster assistance program cover for the year of loss will be eligible for CDP benefits.

2005-2007 Livestock Compensation Program

To be eligible for LCP, producers must have:

- Either owned or cash-lease eligible livestock on the beginning date of the applicable disaster period; and
• Suffered an eligible feed loss from produced or purchased forage or feedstuffs, or incurred additional feed costs as a result of an eligible disaster event during the applicable disaster period and the feed lost or additional incurred feed costs were intended for use with eligible livestock.

2005-2007 Livestock Indemnity Program

To be eligible for LIP, an owner's livestock must:

- Have died in an eligible county as a direct result of an eligible disaster event:
o After 1/1/05, and before 12/31/07;
o No later than 60 calendar days from the ending date of the applicable disaster period, but before 12/31/07; and
o In the calendar year for which benefits are requested.
• Have been maintained for a commercial farming operation on the day they died; and
• Not have been produced for reasons other than commercial farming.



To be eligible for LIP, a contract grower must have had the following on the day the livestock died:

- A written agreement with the eligible livestock owner, setting the specific terms, conditions and obligations of the parties involved, regarding the production of livestock; and
▪ Control of the eligible livestock on the day the livestock died.

EMERGENCY LOANS AVAILABLE

USDA/FSA emergency farm loans are available in St. Joseph County to all qualified farm operators as a result of losses caused by the following weather conditions:

<i>Designation Code & Declaration Date</i>	<i>Disaster Description</i>	<i>Dates of Disaster</i>	<i>Final Date To Apply</i>
S2628 11/07/2007	Drought	04/01/2007 & continuing	07/07/2008
S2631 11/14/2007	Several Frost and Freeze Events	04/04/2007- 06/13/2007	07/14/2008
S2636 11/20/2007	Tornadoes, Hail, Excessive Rain, and High Winds	05/15/2007- 09/11/2007	07/21/2008
N-912 10/07/2007	Storms with Tornadoes, Hail and High Winds Physical losses only.	07/03/07- 08/29/07	06/05/2008
M1740 01/30/2008	Severe Storms and Flooding	01/07/2008	09/30/2008
S2657 12/27/2007	Extended Drought	06/05/2007- 11/07/2007	08/27/2008

Emergency loan funds may be used to:

- Restore or replace essential property;
- Pay all or part of production costs associated with the disaster year;
- Pay essential family living expenses;
- Reorganize the farming operation; and
- Refinance certain debts.

All emergency loans must be fully collateralized. Producers can borrow up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses, to a maximum amount of \$500,000.

Loans for crop, livestock, and non-real estate losses are normally repaid within 1 to 7 years; depending on the loan purpose, repayment ability and collateral available as loan security. In special circumstances, terms of up to 20 years may be authorized. Loans for physical losses to real estate are normally repaid within 30 years. In certain circumstances, repayment may be made over a maximum of 40 years.

The current annual interest rate for emergency loans is 3.75 percent.

Please contact Phillip DeYoung or Dana Sherman for more details.

NEED SOME SHORT-TERM MONEY??

Marketing assistance loans provide producers interim financing to meet cash flow needs.

You must maintain control of the commodity and title to the commodity. Once beneficial interest in the commodity is lost; the commodity loses eligibility for a loan, even if you later regain beneficial interest.

Loans mature on the last day of the ninth calendar month following the month in which the loan is approved.

Final Loan Availability Dates:

- **March 31 for barley, honey, oats, wheat**
- **May 31 for corn, grain sorghum, soybeans**

2007-Crop Loan Rates: Barley - \$1.69; Corn - \$1.90; Grain Sorghum - \$3.33; Oats - \$1.34; Soybeans - \$5.01

IMPORTANT

If you have an outstanding commodity loan, make sure you continually monitor the storage structure to make sure it is secure and free of leaks **and** the commodity to make sure it is still in good condition. Weather fluctuations after harvest may have adversely affected the quality of your stored grain.

If you need to move the commodity or are planning to feed or sell some loan commodity, make sure you request authorization **BEFORE** you take any action.

Liquidated damages and penalties may be assessed if loan grain is moved without previous authorization.

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.

Form FSA-153 is available at the local FSA county office or at: <http://www.sc.egov.usda.gov>.



COVERAGE AVAILABLE FOR NON-INSURABLE

CROPS

The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when lows yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur, due to natural disasters.

To be eligible for NAP assistance, crops must be non-insurable crops and agricultural commodities for which the catastrophic risk protection level of crop insurance is not available, and must be any of the following commercially produced crops:

- Crops grown for food;
- Crops planted and grown for livestock consumption, including, but not limited to, grain and forage crops, including native forage;
- Specialty crops, such as honey and maple sap;
- Value loss crops, such as aquaculture, Christmas trees, ornamental nursery and turf grass sod;
- Seed crops where the propagation stock is produced for sale as seed stock for other eligible NAP crop production.

To remain compliant in NAP, producers must: 1) timely file acreage reports; 2) follow HEL and Wetland conservation compliance requirements; 3) file Notice of Loss within 15 days of weather damage or within 15 days of the loss becoming apparent; 4) request loss adjustment appraisals if any crop will not be harvested or to document production left in the field; and 5) provide true and complete production records for the unit.

MARCH 15TH is the application deadline for NAP coverage on spring seeded crops and **NOVEMBER 20TH** is the application deadline for fall seeded and perennial crops.

PROTECTING YOUR PRIVACY

We are continually working to protect your privacy. Some of our records contain information that is considered sensitive data and is protected under the Privacy Act.

If we are not certain of the identity of the person requesting sensitive data, we will ask the requester to provide a picture id, such as a driver's license. This is only to verify the identity of the person requesting the information. Please help us to protect your privacy and the privacy of others.

WORKSHOPS

We are planning workshops for women who are interested in learning more about USDA programs administered by the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Conservation District. We will send out individual mailings to the women on our mailing list. Feel free to contact our office for more details or to let us know what you are interested in learning more about.

SPOUSAL SIGNATURES

Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office staff by either spouse.

The exception to this is loans. Husbands and wives may not sign loan documents for each other.

Schedule for 2008 County Committee Meetings

2008 County Committee meetings are scheduled to be held on the following dates, with meetings set to begin at 7:30 a.m. Regular session meetings are open to the public.

February 20, 2008	August 20, 2008
March 19, 2008	September 17, 2008
April 16, 2008	October 15, 2008
May 21, 2008	November 19, 2008
June 18, 2008	December 3, 2008
July 16, 2008	January 21, 2009



Tim Wagner was re-elected to the St. Joseph FSA County Committee as the COC member for LAA # 1. Henry E. Miller is the 1st alternate, and Carroll Parmeter is the 2nd alternate.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the election process!!

TOO BUSY TO STOP BY THE FSA OFFICE??

If you are too busy getting work done around the farm to come into your local FSA office to conduct business and complete your paperwork, here is a solution. Retain an agent to act on your behalf. This can be done by completing an FSA-211, *Power of Attorney*.

This form is available at your local USDA Service Center or on-line at <http://forms.sc.egov.usdda.gov>. Forms that are completed outside USDA Service Center offices must be notarized.

QUESTIONS ON PROGRAMS AVAILABLE THROUGH RURAL DEVELOPMENT??

A Rural Development representative will be in our office the first Tuesday of every month. She will be available to meet with producers or receive phone calls to answer questions about Rural Development programs. To make an appointment, call 1-888-771-6993. You may also stop by without an appointment.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
 ST JOSEPH COUNTY FARM SERVICE AGENCY
 693 EAST MAIN STREET
 CENTREVILLE, MICHIGAN 49032

PRESORTED STANDARD
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID
 LANSING, MI
 PERMIT NO. 19

FARM BILL UPDATE



We are currently awaiting the passage of a new farm bill. As soon as we know the details of a new farm program, we will notify you by newsletter and/or postcard. So watch your mailbox for this important information and get ready to call our office for your appointment!!

YOUR FSA INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE ONLINE FOR YOU TO REVIEW

Do you want to check on a farm payment, review the payments you have received this year, sign up for FSA programs online??

Get signed up, and you will be able to do all of this and more on your home computer. Check it out for yourself at: www.eauth.egov.usda.gov, or contact our office for more details.

Non-Discrimination Statement

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs 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, S.W., Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, please contact Sharon Hoch at 269-467-6336, EXT 2.