



January 2008

Issue No. 1

Van Buren/Kalamazoo Farm Service Agency NEWSLETTER

Van Buren FSA

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269-657-7055
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County Committee

Timothy Hood
Ryan Meachum
Chester Ray

Staff

Debi Gavrun, PT
Mary Jo Hendrixson, PT
William Hogan, FLM
Pamela Merwin, PT
Carolyn Skeen, PT
Ron Slaughter, PT
James L. Vogt, CED

Kalamazoo FSA

1911 W. Centre Ave.
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269-327-0940
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County Committee

Thelma Buckham
Ben Fritz
Tim Vosburg

Staff

Dan Brauer, PT
Phillip DeYoung, FLM
Marnie Plucienik, PT
Matthew Skrzypek, FA
James L. Vogt, CED

FSA Website

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/>

Hours

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



2007 DISASTER PROGRAMS EXTENDED TO INCLUDE ALL 2007 CROPS AND LOSSES

The previously announced disaster legislation (The 2007 Act) limited eligibility under CDP for 2007 crops to include only those crop acres planted, or prevented from being planted, before February 28, 2007.

A similar eligibility requirement that 2007 livestock and livestock feed losses must have occurred in a primary or contiguous county named in a Secretarial or Presidential disaster declaration before February 28, 2007, applied to LIP and LCP.

On December 26, 2007, the President signed into law the Department of State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2008 (The 2008 Act).

The 2008 Act amended the February 28, 2007, date and allows for ALL crops planted for the 2007 crop year to be included for loss purposes under CDP. Similarly, under LIP and LCP, the 2008 Act extends the date livestock and livestock feed losses could have occurred in a primary or contiguous county named in a Secretarial or Presidential disaster declaration to December 31, 2007.

For CDP purposes, this date change does not make 2008 crops planted in 2007 eligible under CDP.



Signup for CDP, LCP and LIP is underway. **Please contact your local county office to schedule an appointment to make application.**

VAN BUREN COUNTY COMMITTEE SEEKING ADVISOR

County Committees are required to recommend an advisor to be a voice for and ensure a fair representation for underrepresented and socially disadvantaged groups.



Nominees shall:

- be actively participating in farming in the county or area
- be willing and able to serve as an advisor, if appointed
- indicate in writing their willingness and ability to serve.

COC advisors are responsible for:

- attending each COC meeting, including executive sessions
- participating in all deliberations
- increasing awareness of and participation in FSA activities, including elections, by eligible voters to ensure that socially disadvantaged group problems and viewpoints are understood and considered in FSA actions
- helping to develop interest and incentives in socially disadvantaged groups for nomination during the election process
- performing special duties at COC's request

The appointment shall be for a 12-month period beginning March 1, 2008.

Please contact CED James Vogt at 269-657-7055 if you or someone you know is interested in being nominated for COC advisor.

EMERGENCY FARM LOANS AVAILABLE

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides emergency loans to help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding, other natural disasters, or quarantine.

<i>Designation Code & Declaration Date</i>	<i>Counties Affected</i>	<i>Disaster Description</i>	<i>Dates of Disaster</i>	<i>Final Date To Apply</i>
S2628 11/07/2007	Kalamazoo & Van Buren	Drought	04/01/2007	07/07/2008
S2631 11/14/2007	Kalamazoo & Van Buren	Several Frost and Freeze Events	04/04/2007- 06/13/2007	07/14/2008
S2636 11/20/2007	Kalamazoo & Van Buren	Tornadoes, Hail, Excessive Rain, and High Winds	05/15/2007- 09/11/2007	07/21/2008

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.



Emergency loans may be made to farmers and ranchers who:

- Own or operate land located in a county declared by the President as a disaster area or designated by the Secretary of Agriculture as a disaster area or quarantine area (for physical losses only, the FSA Administrator may authorize emergency loan assistance);
- Are established family farm operators and have sufficient farming or ranching experience;
- Are citizens or permanent residents of the United States;
- Have suffered at least a 30-percent loss in crop production or a physical loss to livestock, livestock products, real estate, or chattel property;
- Have an acceptable credit history;
- Are unable to receive credit from commercial sources;
- Can provide collateral to secure the loan; and
- Have repayment ability.

FSA loan requirements are different from those of other lenders. Some of the more significant differences are the following:

- Borrowers must keep acceptable farm records;
- Borrowers must operate in accordance with a farm plan they develop and agree to with local FSA staff; and
- Borrowers may be required to participate in a financial management-training program and obtain crop insurance.

All emergency loans must be fully collateralized. The specific type of collateral may vary depending on the loan purpose, repayment ability and the individual circumstances of the applicant. If applicants cannot provide adequate collateral, their repayment ability may be considered as collateral to secure the loan. A first lien is required on property or products acquired, produced, or refinanced with loan funds.



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.

Kalamazoo County producers should contact Phillip DeYoung at 269-781-4263 and Van Buren County producers should contact William Hogan at 269-657-7055 to make application.

FARM BILL UPDATE



Wondering why we haven't started signups for the 2008 program yet? Because the Farm Bill is still tied up in Congress! The House passed their version last July, while the Senate's version wasn't passed until December. It will now go to a U.S. House and Senate Conference Committee to work out the differences in the two versions. Then the compromise version of the new bill will again be voted on by the entire House and Senate before it's sent to the President to sign into law. After that, it is published in the Federal Register, and programs, procedures, handbooks and forms will have to be developed before a signup is announced. In other words, don't hold your breath!

2007-CROP COMMODITY LOANS AVAILABLE

Marketing assistance loans provide producers interim financing at harvest time to meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are typically at harvest-time lows. Loans mature on the last day of the ninth calendar month following the month in which the loan is approved. Contact your local office for more information.

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.

2007 COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION RESULTS

The FSA County Committee (COC) elections were completed in December. We would like to thank all those who took the time to vote for the individual of their choice and a great big thank you to those who were willing to serve on the committee! Results for Kalamazoo and Van Buren Counties are as follows:

KALAMAZOO COUNTY LAA # 3
(Prairie Ronde, Schoolcraft, Brady, Wakeshma)
John Benjamin Fritz - COC Member

The Kalamazoo FSA County Committee meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at 9:00 a.m. in the Kalamazoo FSA Office in Portage and are open to the public.

VAN BUREN COUNTY LAA # 1
(South Haven, Geneva, Covert, Bangor, Hartford, Keeler, Hamilton)
Ryan Meachum - COC Member
William Lawson Jr - 1st Alternate to COC
Jack E. Phillips - 2nd Alternate to COC

The Van Buren FSA County Committee meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at 8:30 a.m. in the Van Buren FSA Office in Paw Paw and are open to the public.

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 foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

***** DID YOU KNOW??? The average American eats 124 lbs. of potatoes each year! *****



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
 VAN BUREN FARM SERVICE AGENCY
 1035 EAST MICHIGAN AVENUE
 PAW PAW, MICHIGAN 49079

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

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

January 21	Martin Luther King Jr’s Birthday Holiday – Offices Closed
January 31	Deadline to Request 2006-Crop Wool and Mohair Loans & LDPs
February 4	Deadline to Submit 2007 Census of Agriculture Forms
February 13	Kalamazoo County Committee Meeting
February 18	Presidents’ Day Holiday – Offices Closed
February 19	Van Buren County Committee Meeting
March 12	Kalamazoo County Committee Meeting
March 15	Sales Closing Date for Crop Insurance on Corn, Seed Corn, Soybeans, Canning Beans, Popcorn, Oats, Barley
March 15	Deadline to Purchase NAP Coverage for Spring-Seeded Vegetables
March 18	Van Buren County Committee Meeting
March 31	Final Date to Obtain 2007-Crop Wheat, Oats & Barley Loans & LDPs
Ongoing	2005 – 2007 Crop Disaster Program
Ongoing	2005 – 2007 Livestock Compensation Program
Ongoing	2005 – 2007 Livestock Indemnity Program
Ongoing	Farm Storage Facility Loans

eGOV CUSTOMER REGISTRATION PROCESS

1. Access your website of interest:
 - USDA Customer Statement <http://customerstatement.usda.gov>
 - Electronic LDP Signup http://www.fsa.usda.gov/egov/eldp_default.htm
 - Electronic DCP Signup http://www.fsa.usda.gov/egov/edcp_default.htm
2. Create an online user profile and apply for Level 2 access
3. Respond to the verification email within 7 days of receipt.
4. Visit the County Office in person and provide photo identification to the Local Registration Authority in order to receive Level 2 Activation.
5. Access Level 2 applications within 1 hour after profile has been activated.

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 their local County Office in person or by phone.

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.