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Reasonable Accommodations

Special accommodation will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment. If special accommodations are required, please contact us at the phone numbers listed.

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FSA News

Midland County

April 2007

DCP Sign Up Underway make your appointment now

We can now issue up to 22% of the 2007 advance direct payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program. Update your DCP contract and put the advance payment to work for your farm today. Farmers who want to update their contracts need to address land and business issues:

- Will you continue to rent the same property you rented last year? If not, notify the staff so we can update your farm records or perform a reconstitution to remove land from your farming operation.
- A cash-rent certification may be used if you rented the land last year; however, an advance payment cannot be issued for the farm until July 1, 2007.

The deadline to sign up for 2007 DCP is August 3rd. Applications filed after that date will be charged a \$100.00 late filing fee for each farm. If you have changes from the past year, contact us in advance to help speed the process up.
Please make an appointment to sign up if you haven't already.

Crop Reporting Deadline

Producers who are participating in DCP and CRP are reminded that they must report their planted acreage each year.

The deadline for fall seeded small grains and CRP is **June 30th**. All other crops must be reported no later than **July 15th**.

Any crops reported after these dates will be charged a late filing fee. Call for your appointment.

Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act 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 with 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent 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.

Power of Attorney

If you're too busy getting work done around the farm to come into your local FSA office to conduct business and complete your paperwork, here's a solution. Retain an agent to act on your behalf for programs and transactions authorized under the 2002 Farm Bill and most other FSA administered programs. This can be done by completing an FSA-211, Power of Attorney. The form is available at your local USDA Service Center or on-line at <http://forms.sc.egov.usdda.gov>. Forms obtained and completed outside USDA Service Centers offices must be notarize.

Customer Statement

The Customer Statement puts a range of USDA services and programs into a single report that's **at your fingertips and available online, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.**

It allows USDA customers to view their participation, application and payment status in various commodity and conservation programs; information on farm loans; and conservation plan and land unit information. Coming sometime in the future will be digital maps!

To learn about the Customer Statement, visit <http://customerstatement.usda.gov/>. Or you're local FSA Office. The FSA Staff would encourage everyone to try this out. Remember you must get a level 2 account set up prior to having access to your information.

Spousal Signatures

Spouses may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest, unless written notification denying a spouse this authority has been provided. This procedure does not apply to the commodity loan or Loan Deficiency Program. Spouses must have an FSA-211 on file to sign commodity loan documents on behalf of each other.

Spouses may not sign FSA-211s or claim settlements on behalf of each other or sign on behalf of the other as an authorized signatory for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities.

A spouse's authority to sign documents on behalf of the other spouse does not entitle the spouse to review or receive agency records of the other spouse.

Bank Account Changes

All FSA payments are to be electronically transferred into your bank account, unless you have a legitimate hardship reason for still receiving your payments by check. You need to notify the office if you close your account or if your bank is purchased by another financial institution. Payments will be delayed if we are not aware of changes to account and routing numbers.

Attention Producers, Landowners

- Do you intend to clear timbered 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 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 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 plan on doing any of the above, please stop into our office to complete a new AD-1026 form and to consult with the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Civil Rights Complaint Process

Any person, class or group of persons may file a discrimination complaint with 180 days of an alleged discriminatory action. Complaints may be filed in writing or orally with the agency head, any designated agency official or the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Assistance in filing a complaint can be obtained by calling or visiting any FSA office.

CREP Sign up

We continue to accept applications for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). CREP is designed to reduce water and wind erosion on cropland and to provide wildlife habitat. Producers receive annual per acre payment for 15 years along with other financial incentives.

Eligible land must have been cropped 4 out of 6 years from 1996 – 2001, have been in a legume rotation and cropped 1 year out of the last 8, or be considered marginal pastureland.

Eligible CREP practices are filter strips, riparian buffers, field windbreaks, and wetland restorations.

Prevented Planting for 2007 Crops

Prevented planted acres means that you were unable to plant a crop on the field. If you plant an alternative crop on those acres, those acres are not considered prevented planting. For example, if you intended to plant oats, but subsequently planted corn on the acres, FSA does not consider those acres as prevented planting. If you were unable to plant all of the acres you intended then you need to take action.

You want to make sure you report those acres as prevented planted when you file your acreage report.

If you have crop insurance, talk to your agent **now**. Find out if prevented planted acres are covered under your policy and if restrictions apply. Rules vary by program.

If your crop is covered by NAP: file a notice of loss with the office within 15 days of loss, report the acres by the required NAP crop reporting date.

Calculating Producer History

Producers who intend to plant fruits, vegetables or **dry beans** (FAV/WR) on base acreage enrolled in the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program, should contact the county office staff to calculate their

producer history if the following FAV/WR double cropping or farm history exception does not apply.

Farm History. FAV/WR are planted on a farm with an established history of such planting. The WR/FAV history is based on the farm's planting for crop years 1991-1995 and 1998-2001. In this exception, although no contract violation results, the DCP payment acres will be reduced by an acre for each acre of base acreage planted to a FAV/WR.

If this exception doesn't apply to you and you plant FAV/WR on base acres, you will be considered in violation of your DCP contract and subject to losing benefits.

Maintenance of CRP Cover

CRP participants: cover maintenance is your responsibility and must be done according to your conservation plan. After establishment, All CRP maintenance activity, such as mowing, burning and spraying, must be conducted outside the primary nesting season for wildlife (May 1st through July 31st) and in accordance with your conservation plan. After establishment, mowing activities may be allowed once per year and **ONLY** if needed to maintain the cover. This means **only clipping weeds off the top of the established cover**, and **ONLY** on the portion of the planting in need of maintenance. After establishment, mowing is only allowed between August 1st and August 20th to protect ground nesting wildlife and to allow adequate re-growth for winter.

If a variance is needed for the above stated policy, please contact the local FSA Office. Variances can be pre-approved on a case-by-case basis.