Farm Service Agency

June 2007

Ottawa County Farm Service Agency Newsletter

Ottawa County FSA
16731 Ferris St
Grand Haven MI 49417
(616) 842-5852 (phone)
(616) 842-2820 (fax)

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

County Committee
Kirk Haverdink
Wayne Hecksel
Dave Pyle

COC Advisor
Judy Rant

Farm Program Staff
Blain Becktold, CED
Dawn Essenburg, PT
Jackie French, PT
Andy Stille, PT

Field Reporter
Les Kloosterman

Farm Loan Staff
Leslie Wills, FLM
Susan McIntosh, PT

Dates to Remember

July 2
Last day to report fall-seeded crops for 2007 crop year

July 4
Independence Day holiday – office closed

July 16
Deadline to file acreage reports for all spring seeded crops

August 1
Deadline for County Committee election nominations

Final day to request reconstitution for 2007 crop year

August 3
Final day to sign up for 2007 DCP

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

2007 Crop Reporting

Producers are required to report all of their cropland, ***including the field planting date,*** in order to qualify for several program benefits. These benefits include:

- Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program **(DCP)** payments
- Commodity Loans and Loan Deficiency Payments **(LDP)**
- Conservation Reserve Program **(CRP)** Annual Rental Payments
- Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program **(NAP)** Payments

The acreage reporting deadlines are **July 2** for fall-seeded crops (including wheat) and **July 16** for all other crops, including hay, alfalfa, CRP, corn, soybeans, fruits, vegetables, and idle ground. Acreage reports for failed acreage must be filed before the crop is destroyed and must be approved by the County Committee.

-CALL FOR AN APPOINTMENT TODAY-

DCP Enrollment Extended

FSA has announced the sign-up deadline for the 2007 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) has been extended to **August 3, 2007**.

The late-file fee of $100 will only be assessed for farms that are enrolled after August 3, 2007 and before September 30, 2007.

Enrollment in DCP for the 2007 contract period was scheduled to end on June 1, 2007. The extension applies only to the enrollment time frame, and does not extend the 2007 DCP contract period. Even with the extra time, do not put off your DCP sign-up as the office staff will soon be occupied with certification appointments.

Seeking Nominations for COC Advisor

Ottawa County Office is currently seeking nominations for a minority advisor to the County Committee. This is a paid position with duties that include meeting with the Committee members, offering suggestions, and advising on issues that come before them. Anyone interested in the position should submit a short narrative about themselves to the FSA office no later than December 31, 2007. The term will become effective March 1, 2008. Remember, you may nominate yourself or another producer.

CRP Mid-Contract Mgt

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants are reminded to review your Conservation Plan for mid-contract management requirements. Mid contract management is a new requirement that started with CRP Sign-up 26 (2003). Mid contract management is necessary for certain CRP ground cover to ensure that original plant diversity, wildlife benefits, and protection of the soil and water resources are present for the life of the contract.

County Committee Nominations

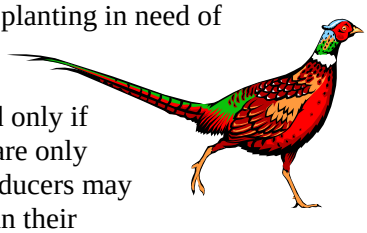
Nominations for candidates to run for the Farm Service Agency county committee election representing producers in Local Administrative Area (LAA) #1 will be accepted now through August 1, 2007. Producers eligible to vote in LAA 1, who participate or cooperate in an FSA program, and are of legal voting age may be nominated to serve on the county committee. Individuals may nominate themselves or others as candidates. Also, organizations representing socially disadvantaged minorities and women farmers or ranchers may also nominate candidates.

LAA 1 consists of Chester, Wright and Polkton townships as well as the township portions North of the Grand River including Crockery, Spring Lake, Allendale, Tallmadge, Grand Haven and Georgetown.

Each producer on our mailing list will soon receive a newsletter from the Michigan FSA State Office which will include a nomination petition (FSA-669). More information on the elections, including nomination forms, is available at the county office or online at: http://www.fsa.usda.gov under the News & Events tab.

Maintenance of CRP Cover

Attention Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants: cover maintenance is your responsibility and must be done according to your conservation plan. Mowing for cosmetic purposes or general weed control is not allowed and will result in financial penalties. Mowing maintenance activities may be allowed once per year and only if it's needed to maintain the approved cover, and only on the portion of the planting in need of maintenance. Mowing is only allowed between August 1st and August 20th to protect ground-nesting wildlife and to allow adequate re-growth for winter cover. All maintenance activities, other than mowing, may be allowed once per year and only if needed to maintain the approved cover. NON-MOWING maintenance activities are only allowed between August 1st and April 30th to protect ground-nesting wildlife. Producers may request permission to perform maintenance activities prior to the dates specified in their contracts, but each has to be approved by the COC on a case-by-case basis. ***Contact the FSA office prior to conducting any maintenance on your CRP acres.***



UNAUTHORIZED DISPOSAL OF LOAN COMMODITY

Grain under loan that has been disposed of through feeding, selling or any other form of disposal without prior written authorization from the county office staff is considered unauthorized disposition. The financial penalties are severe and it may affect a producer's ability to obtain future farm-stored loans. Always call the office before any loan grain is fed, moved, or sold.

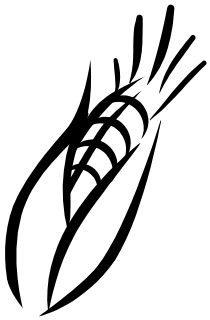
HELP PREVENT CROP INSURANCE FRAUD AND ABUSE

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Risk Management Agency (RMA) are required to coordinate a plan to identify, address, and reconcile discrepancies of all relevant producer-derived information.

We are further directed to coordinate a monitoring program, which includes fact-finding relative to allegations of FCIC fraud, waste and abuse. As a key preventative measure, it is important that the agricultural community be made fully aware of this joint effort to reduce fraud, waste and abuse by the following methods:

- FSA will be assisting RMA and insurance providers in monitoring crop conditions throughout the growing season.
- FSA will refer all suspected cases of fraud, waste and abuse of the system to RMA.
- FSA will assist RMA with the auditing of claims.

Producers are encouraged to report suspected cases of fraud, waste and abuse to the local FSA office, RMA Office, or the Office of the Inspector General.

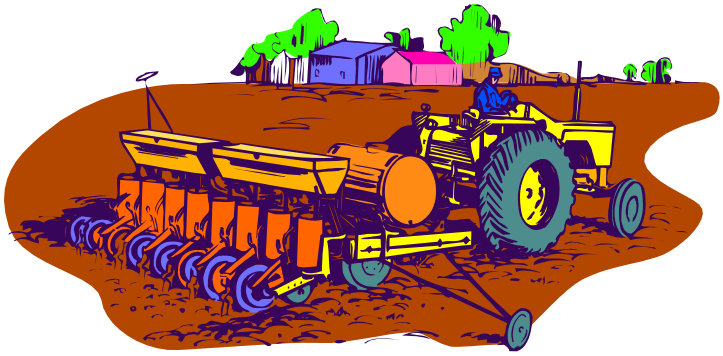


File CCC-633EZ Prior to Harvest for LDP Eligibility

Form CCC-633EZ is required to request loan deficiency payments on all crops. Page 1 of the form must be submitted ***before*** harvest of the crop. The best time to do this is when you are reporting your crops. Page 2 of the form is submitted prior to losing beneficial interest (title) to the crop for producers who wish to choose the effective date for their LDP, or anytime before the final loan availability date for producers who wish to receive the LDP rate in effect on the date they lose beneficial interest in the commodity.

Veggies or Fruits on DCP Acres

Producers intending to plant FAV's (fruits or vegetables), such as dry beans, are reminded to check with the FSA office **before** planting.



FAV's planted on 2007 DCP payment acres will cause a reduction in DCP payments on that FSA farm, on an acre for acre basis, and may create serious consequences if that FSA farm or the producer does not have a history of planting such crops.

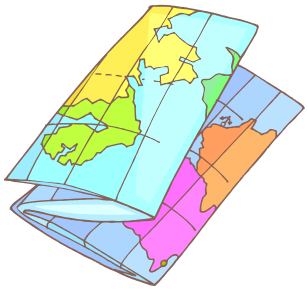
Again, we encourage producers to check with the local FSA office before planting.

Bank Account Changes

All FSA payments are supposed to be electronically transferred into your bank account. You must notify the office if you close your account or if your bank is purchased by another financial institution. Payments can be delayed if we are not aware of changes to account and routing numbers.

GIS HAS ARRIVED

Three little letters are having a big effect at the county office and on the farm these days. Those letters are G-I-S, and they stand for Geographic Information System. GIS is a computer-based tool for capturing, storing, mapping and analyzing geographic information. The Farm Service Agency has adopted GIS to replace the old system of hard copy maps and aerial photographs. It is faster and more accurate than the old system, and will save taxpayers money over the long term. Here's how GIS works. We started with up-to-date aerial photographs of the entire county. These photographs were scanned and have been stored in the computer which has become the base layer of the GIS. Technicians examined the photos and identified individual farms. They then outlined each farm field, creating another layer of data called the Common Land Unit. The software stored the shape of the field and has tied it to a specific location using latitude and longitude. The software also automatically — and very accurately — calculates the size of the fields. In time, the CLU layer will be connected to a database that contains information about the cropping history for that particular field. As an added bonus, producers will eventually have the ability to review their farm's GIS files online from the comfort of their homes.



Controlled Substance

Any person who is convicted under federal or state law of a controlled substance violation could be ineligible for USDA payments or benefits. Violations include planting, harvesting or growing a prohibited plant. Prohibited plants include marijuana, opium poppies and other drug producing plants.

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USDA United States Department of Agriculture

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Farm Loan Program Highlights

FSA's loan programs are designed to help family farmers who are temporarily unable to obtain private, commercial credit. Several types of farm loans are available to qualified applicants:

- **Guaranteed Loans**: An approved lender makes the loan at their rates, terms, and conditions. FSA guarantees the loan up to 90% to assist producers with their financial needs.
- **Direct Loans**: Producers unable to qualify for a guaranteed loan from a commercial lender may be eligible for a loan direct from FSA. Direct loans can be used for the same types of purchases as guaranteed loans.
- **Socially Disadvantaged Loans**: This program has been developed to specifically target funding for individuals who are identified as belonging to a Socially Disadvantaged Group. A socially disadvantaged applicant is one who has been subject to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice. The Agency has identified these groups as Women, Asians, African-Americans, American Indians, Hispanics, Alaskan Natives, and Pacific Islanders.
- **Beginning Farmer Loans**: FSA provides direct and guaranteed loan assistance for beginning farmers who are unable to obtain financing from commercial credit sources.
- **Emergency Loss Loans**: Used for disaster relief.
- **Rural Youth Loans**: Helps youth sponsored by a project advisor, such as a 4-H club.
- **Indian Land Acquisition Loans**: Enables Indian Tribes to purchase privately held lands that lie within their reservations.

Interested producers should contact Leslie Wills, Farm Loan Manager, at the Ottawa County FSA office.

Address Changes

FSA is now mailing county newsletters from a central site in Lansing. If you receive multiple newsletters at the same address, or you are not interested in the material provided, **PLEASE** let FSA know so that the necessary corrections can be made to future mailings. If you know someone who would benefit from this newsletter, please have them contact FSA.

Non-Discrimination Statement

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.