Farm Service Agency

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Ohio State FSA Newsletter

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USDA Designates 56 Ohio Counties Primary Natural Disaster Areas

The USDA has designated 56 counties in Ohio as primary agricultural natural disaster areas, making certain farmers and other agricultural producers in the counties eligible for low-interest emergency loans from USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA).

The following counties were designated as primary natural disaster areas, due to damages and losses caused by frost and freeze conditions that occurred from April 1, 2007 through April 20, 2007. Those counties are: Adams, Athens, Auglaize, Belmont, Brown, Butler, Champaign, Clark, Clermont, Clinton, Coshocton, Darke, Fairfield, Franklin, Fulton, Gallia, Geauga, Greene, Guernsey, Hamilton, Highland, Hocking, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Knox, Lawrence, Licking, Logan, Lorain, Lucas, Madison, Marion, Medina, Meigs, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Morrow, Muskingum, Noble, Ottawa, Paulding, Perry, Pickaway, Pike, Portage, Preble, Ross, Sandusky, Scioto, Union, Vinton, Warren, Washington and Wyandot.

Counties eligible because they are contiguous to those listed above are: Allen, Ashland, Ashtabula, Carroll, Columbiana, Crawford, Cuyahoga, Defiance, Delaware, Erie, Fayette, Hancock, Hardin, Harrison, Henry, Huron, Lake, Mahoning, Mercer, Miami, Putnam, Richland, Seneca, Shelby, Stark, Summit, Trumbull, Tuscarawas, Van Wert, Wayne, Williams and Wood.

All counties listed above were designated natural disaster areas on July 20, 2007, making all qualified farm operators in the designated areas eligible for low-interest emergency loans from USDA's FSA, provided eligibility requirements are met. To qualify, farmers must be unable to obtain credit from commercial sources. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part or all of their actual losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. FSA has a variety of programs, in addition to the emergency loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity.

USDA has also made other programs available to assist farmers, including the Emergency Conservation Program, Federal Crop Insurance and the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program.

Interested farmers should contact their local FSA county office for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs.

Election Update

The period to nominate candidates for the upcoming county committee election **is closed.** Nominations were due in the county office on **Wednesday, Aug. 1.** Ballots will be mailed to all eligible voters **by Nov. 2.** Voted ballots must be returned to the county office **by Dec. 3.**

If no valid nominations have been filed, the Secretary of Agriculture may nominate up to two individuals to be placed on the ballot.

County committee elections give farmers and producers an important opportunity to ensure that their FSA county committees represent them.

Farmers and producers who serve on county committees help make decisions necessary to administer federal farm programs offered in their communities. County committees make decisions on agricultural issues such as; commodity price support loans and payments, conservation programs, disaster payments and employing County Executive Directors.

If you participate or cooperate in programs administered by FSA and live in the local administrative area conducting an election, you may be nominated for candidacy for a committee. You can obtain a complete list of eligibility requirements by visiting the county office or online at: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/facts/html/cocelig06.htm.

- Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters **by Nov. 2.** The last day to return voted ballots to the county office **is Dec. 3.**
- Newly elected county committee members take office **Jan. 1, 2008.**

For detailed information about FSA county committees visit the county office or go on-line at: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=newsroom&subject=landing&topic=cce .

Maintaining Stored Grain Quality

Due to the recent high temperatures producers are reminded to keep an eye on the condition and quality of the stored grain. Remember to contact your local FSA office if you notice changes in the condition and quality of the stored grain.

Emergency Haying or Grazing

USDA has approved the Farm Service Agency (FSA) CRP participants and eligible livestock producers **in Adams, Brown, Highland, Muskingum, Morgan, Pickaway and Ross** counties, Ohio, for Emergency Haying and Grazing of approved CRP acres as a result of this year's drought conditions.

All counties in Ohio are in the area of eligibility for Emergency Haying and Grazing of CRP acres by eligible livestock producers. Eligible livestock producers **only within the approved counties** may purchase hay or conduct Emergency Haying and Grazing of eligible CRP acreage from an eligible CRP participant located in the expanded area. The participant must be willing to provide hay or haying and grazing under Emergency Haying and Grazing provisions and will be assessed a 10 percent reduction in their annual rental payment. CRP participants cannot rent or lease the haying and grazing privilege for an amount greater than the applicable payment reduction.

This allows any CRP participant who has CRP acreage in that expanded area to permit producers from the seven approved counties to come in and hay or graze their acreage. Livestock producers or landowners interested in opening up their CRP acres for Emergency Haying and Grazing should contact their local Farm Service Agency office.

To allow Emergency Haying and Grazing, a county must receive national approval by verifying the county has suffered at least a 40 percent loss of normal moisture and forage for the preceding four-month qualifying period. Also, CRP participants must have prior approval by their county office before conducting any Emergency Haying and Grazing of CRP acres.

CRP is a voluntary program that offers annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term resource-conserving cover on eligible land. USDA offers a number of programs to assist producers affected by drought or other natural disasters.

Interested CRP participants and eligible livestock producers should contact the local FSA office for more information regarding Emergency Haying and Grazing and sign-up for approval before you begin any haying and grazing.

Farm Storage Facility Loans

Low interest rate loans for storage facilities are available for producers to build or remodel farm storage facilities for a variety of commodities, including wheat, soybeans and corn.

The seven-year Farm Storage Facility Loans are available for the purchase and installation of eligible storage facilities, permanently affixed drying or handling equipment, or remodeling existing facilities. Eligible facilities include new conventional-type cribs or bins and new and remanufactured oxygen-limiting and other upright silo-type structures.

All Farm Storage Facility Loans are secured by a promissory note and security agreement. The maximum amount that may be borrowed is 85 percent of the net cost of the storage or handling equipment, up to $100,000 for each borrower. A minimum down payment is also required. For details, contact the county office staff.

Reasonable Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If special accommodations are required, please call the Farm Service Agency county office staff, and we will be happy to make any arrangements that are necessary.

Hay Net Available Online

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has announced that farmers may use the "*FSA Hay Net*" to find hay. The FSA electronic Hay Net Ad Service is an Internet-based service allowing farmers to share 'Need Hay' ads and 'Have Hay' ads online.

Anyone wishing to place an ad must complete a one-time registration process. The process is easy and only requires creating a user ID and password and confirming your email. Others who only wish to view the ads placed online can browse the site without creating a user account. The website can be found at: http://www.fsa.usda.gov. At the bottom of the screen, click on *"FSA Hay Net"*.

For more information about the Hay Net, contact the County office

State Rental Rates

As you recall earlier this summer, the Ohio Farm Service Agency (FSA) county offices were reviewing the soil rental rates to determine the maximum payment rate for CRP annual payments. Recently, the county offices have finished reviewing the soil rental rates and made recommendations to the State level reviewing authority. State recommendations have been recently approved by the National CRP program manager.

So, why were county soil rental rates changed? To ensure with the recent dramatic increase in commodity prices, that CRP rental rates were consistent with current higher cash rents. Also, to guarantee CRP rental rates are market-based and track current cash rents. So, how does this affect the CRP participant in Ohio? State rental rates in a majority of Ohio counties have been increased, which will increase the maximum payment rates for CRP. State rental rates for less productive soils were slightly lowered in only a handful of Ohio counties.

The new soil rental rates are in effect now and may be applied to any CRP contract that has not been agreed to by the CRP participant and the FSA county committee. For more information on calculating your CRP maximum annual payment rate, contact your local FSA office.

NAP Coverage

The Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) was designed to reduce financial losses that occur when natural disasters cause a catastrophic loss of production or prevented planting of an eligible crop by providing coverage equivalent to catastrophic (CAT) insurance. Statute limits NAP to each commercial crop or agricultural commodity, except livestock, for which CAT is not available.

The application deadline date for the 2008 NAP coverage for winter wheat, rye, barley and speltz in Ohio **is Oct 1, 2007.**

Producers who already have coverage on 2007 NAP crops may choose to continue coverage on the same crop or crops for 2008, if the applicable service fee is submitted by the application closing date. A new CCC-471, application for coverage is not required to be signed when applying for continuous coverage of the same crop or crops. Producers who choose to add a new crop(s) or delete a crop(s) from previous year's coverage or changing crop shares must file a new CCC-471 with signatures and pay the applicable service fee.

Producers with 2007 NAP coverage must remember to complete the following to qualify for benefits:

- Timely file acreage reports and keep track of harvested production using acceptable methods. For example, bale weights or other means of determining quantities of hay are required.
- File a "Notice of Loss" within 15 days of when a loss is apparent, due to drought, hail, etc.

For more information on NAP coverage please contact your nearest Farm Service Agency office.

Selected Interest Rates for August 2007	
90-Day Treasury Bill	4.750%
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	5.500%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	5.625%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	4.000%
Emergency Loans	3.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loans	5.000%
Sugar Storage Facility Loans	5.250%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	6.000%

Removing CCC Loan Collateral

Producers are reminded, if you have grain under Commodity Credit Corporation loan it cannot be removed or disposed of without prior county office staff authorization or repayment. The county office staff may issue release authorizations based on a telephone or in person request when you are ready to move the grain. A loan violation is subject to monetary and administrative penalties, such as repaying the loan at principal plus interest, liquidated damages, calling the loan and denial of future farm-stored loans and loan deficiency payments.

All commodity loans are subject to spot check. Locking in a market loan repayment rate is not a marketing authorization. If you are planning to move CCC loan grain, call the county office staff, before you HAUL!

DCP Enrollment Deadline Extended

Producers have **until August 3, 2007** to enroll in the 2007 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP). Computer problems have caused application processing delays which prompted the enrollment deadline extension for 2007. The late-file fee of $100 will only be assessed for farms that are enrolled after August 3, 2007 and before September 28, 2007.

Dates to Remember	
August 1	Last day to file County Committee Nomination forms.
August 1	**Final date** to request farm reconstitution for current fiscal year.
August 3	Sign-up ends for 2007 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment Program.
Sept. 4	Labor Day Holiday. **FSA offices closed.**
Sept. 28	**Last day** for late file sign-up for the 2007 DCP program. $100 late fee.
Sept. 28	**Final date** for the 2007 DCP contract revisions.
Oct. 1	**Last day** to apply for 2008 NAP coverage on winter wheat, rye barley and speltz.
Continues	Farm Storage Facility Loans.
Continues	Grasslands Reserve Program.
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve program.

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