

April 2014



Table of Contents

- [FSA Offers Website and Online Overview of Farm Bill Programs](#)
- [Welcome Connie Kiessling](#)
- [Be Prepared for the New Farm Bill!](#)
- [LIP, LFP, ELAP, and TAP Program Sign-Up Begins April](#)
- [Microloan Program](#)
- [2013 ACRE](#)

Calhoun County FSA Updates

Calhoun County FSA Office

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County Executive Director:
Elizabeth Lake

Farm Loan Manager:
Mack Francoeur, Jr.

Program Technicians:
Bonnie Baxter
Kim Odette
Dana Sherman, FLP

County Committee:
Beth Korn, Chairperson
Keith Lawrence, Vice-Chair
Sharon Williams, Member
Connie Kiessling, COC Advisor

Next County Committee Meeting: August 19 (tentative)
8:30 am

FSA Offers Website and Online Overview of Farm Bill Programs

The Agricultural Act of 2014, also known as the 2014 Farm Bill, was signed by President Obama on February 7, 2014. The Act repeals certain programs, continues some programs with modifications, and authorizes several new programs administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Most of these programs are authorized and funded through 2018.

For the latest on 2014 Farm Bill programs administered by FSA, please visit our Farm Bill website at www.fsa.usda.gov/farmbill and for an FSA program overview, please read, download and/or print our recently posted FSA Farm Bill Fact Sheet titled, [What's in the 2014 Farm Bill for Farm Service Agency Customers?](#)

For more information on FSA, please contact your local USDA Service Center or visit us online at www.fsa.usda.gov.

Welcome Connie Kiessling

Connie Kiessling has been appointed County Committee Advisor for one term, going through February 28, 2015. Connie lives in Eckford Township with her husband and three sons. They own a cash-crop farm as well as a small cattle herd.

Be Prepared for the New Farm Bill!

In light of the new 2014 Farm Bill approved on February 7, 2014, new farm programs are beginning to take shape here at FSA. Updated program information is being relayed to FSA county offices as it becomes available. Being at the forefront of new and exciting programs it is important to have your farm records updated **NOW**. With a significantly reduced staff in the Calhoun County office, we strive to provide the best customer service possible. However, waiting to report farm changes until you come in for a program sign-up or certification will delay this process for both you and other producers. We encourage you to come visit us now to report these (and any other) changes:

- Change in **ownership** or land transfer (via deed or land contract)
- Picked up/dropped a **farm or tract**
- **Operation change** from an individual to an LLC, corporation, partnership, etc.
- **Clearing** stumps, dredging, new drainage, etc.
- **Boundary** changes
- **Bank account** change

Call us at the Calhoun County FSA office to set up an appointment to report these changes. **Don't wait until acreage reporting!**

LIP, LFP, ELAP, and TAP Program Sign-Up Begins April 15th

Beginning Tuesday, April 15, 2014, livestock, honeybee, and fruit growers can sign-up for a series of disaster-related programs geared toward producers who have endured significant financial hardship from weather-related disasters.

These disaster related programs were authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill as permanent programs and provide retroactive authority to cover losses that occurred back to October 1, 2011.

Enrollment also begins on April 15 for producers with losses covered by the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP).

- **LIP** provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather. Eligible livestock includes beef cattle, dairy cattle, bison, poultry, sheep, swine, horses, and other livestock as determined by the Secretary.
- **LFP** provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered grazing losses due to drought or fire on publicly managed land. An eligible livestock producer must own, cash lease, or be a contract grower of eligible livestock during the 60 calendar days before the beginning date of the qualifying drought or fire in a county that is rated by the U.S. Drought Monitor as D2, D3, or D4.
- **ELAP** provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish that have losses due to disease, adverse weather, or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires, as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture. Program Fact Sheets specific to honeybees and livestock can be found at these hyperlinks, [ELAP Honeybees](#) and [ELAP Livestock](#)
- **TAP** provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines damaged by natural disasters.

To expedite applications, all producers who experienced losses are encouraged to **collect records** documenting these losses in preparation for the enrollment in these disaster assistance programs. Information on the types of records necessary can be provided by local FSA county offices. Producers also are encouraged to contact their county office ahead of time to schedule an appointment.

For more information, producers may review the [2014 Farm Bill Fact Sheet](#), LIP, LFP, ELAP, and TAP fact sheets online (see hyperlinks above), or visit any local FSA office or USDA Service Center.

Microloan Program

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) developed the Microloan (ML) program to better serve the unique financial operating needs of beginning, niche and small family farm operations.

FSA offers applicants a Microloan designed to help farmers with credit needs of \$35,000 or less. The loan features a streamlined application process built to fit the needs of new and smaller producers. This loan program will also be useful to specialty crop producers and operators of community-supported agriculture (CSA).

Eligible applicants can apply for a maximum amount of \$35,000 to pay for initial start-up expenses such as hoop houses to extend the growing season; essential tools; irrigation; and annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents, marketing, and distribution expenses. As financing needs increase, applicants can apply for a regular operating loan up to the maximum amount of \$300,000 or obtain financing from a commercial lender under FSA's Guaranteed Loan Program.

Contact Mack Francoeur, Jr., Farm Loan Manager for Calhoun, Kalamazoo, and St. Joe counties, at (269) 781-4263, ext. 2, for additional information. A program fact sheet is also available at [Microloans](#), or visit any local FSA office or USDA Service Center.

2013 ACRE

Participation in 2013 ACRE requires production reports for planted acres be submitted by July 15, 2014 for the covered commodities on the farm. Failure to report production for those covered commodities planted on ACRE farms may result in contract termination. If the contract is terminated, all payments, including direct payments previously received plus interest will be required to be refunded.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).