



Cass County FSA News

**Cass County
USDA Service Center**

Cass County FSA
1127 E State Street
Cassopolis, MI 49031
269-445-8641 (phone)
269-445-0619 (fax)
www.fsa.usda.gov/mi

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

County Committee
Michael Gordon
F David Grabemeyer
Carl Sparks
Esther Leach

County Committee
meets
Third Wednesday of
Month

Staff
Marcia J Collins, CED
Kay A Strom, PT
Judi Kidman, PT
Zelda Cloud, PT
Rhonda Barnett, PT
Robert Dohm, FA
Richard Swartz, FA
John M Green, FA



RETIREMENT

After almost 40 years of serving the producers of Cass County, Kay Strom has decided it is time to say goodbye and retire. We don't know how much she'll miss us, especially since she is already planning the huge garden she wants next summer, watching her grandkids, Alyssa, Shane and Sam, and maybe going to a few more races but we will miss her and all her knowledge. Kay started working for ASCS just about out of high school for 14 years; she then stayed home with her children Tami and Greg for 10 years before returning to ASCS/FSA. To celebrate this turning point in her life we will be having an Open House on Wednesday, December 16, 2009, at the Cass County FSA Office from 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM, please join us as we wish her a great retirement.

Supplemental Agriculture Disaster Assistance Program- SURE

SURE is a new disaster program created by the 2008 Farm Bill. SURE will pay 60% of the difference between the SURE program guarantee and the total farm revenue. There is a \$100,000 payment limitation for SURE.

To be eligible producers must have purchased at least the catastrophic level of crop insurance for all insurable crops on all farms and/or NAP coverage for all non-insurable crops on all farms on all crops of economic significance. A producer must also have a 10% production loss on at least one crop of economic significance to qualify. SURE does not pay on grazing losses.

A sign-up period has not been announced yet. Please watch the newspapers, a press release will be sent as soon as a date is set. You can also call the office to ask. Once a sign-up is announced, you will need to call the office to make an appointment. If you have any other questions, contact the office and we will try to answer them.

Marketing Assistance Loans

A Marketing Assistance Loan (MAL) is available for producers who share in the risk of producing the crop. To be eligible, a producer must maintain continual beneficial interest in the crop from harvest through the earlier of the date the loan is repaid or CCC takes title to the commodity. Beneficial interest means retaining the ability to make decisions about the commodity; responsibility for loss or damage to the commodity; and title to the commodity. Once beneficial interest in a commodity is lost, the commodity is ineligible for loan — even if the producer regains beneficial interest.

Commodity loan eligibility also requires compliance with conservation and wetland protection requirements; beneficial interest requirements, acreage reporting and ensuring that the commodity meets Commodity Credit Corporation minimum grade and quality standards. For commodities to be eligible they must have been produced by an eligible producer, be in existence and in a storable condition and be merchantable for food, feed or other uses as determined by CCC. The quality of the commodity in farm storage must be maintained throughout the term of the loan.

Producers do not have to participate in the Direct and Counter-Cyclical and/or ACRE Programs to be eligible for commodity loans.

Violating provisions of a marketing assistance loan may trigger administrative actions, such as assessing liquidated damages, calling the loan and denial of future farm-stored loans.

The term of the loan is nine months. Interest rates on the loan are set by the month in which the loan is disbursed. The interest rate is adjusted on January 1st. The November interest rate is 1.375%

2009 COMMODITY LOAN RATES FOR
CASS COUNTY

Corn - \$1.95
Soybeans - \$5.02

Cass County FSA Office
1127 E State Street
Cassopolis MI 49031

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ADVISOR NOMINATIONS

The Cass County COC is now accepting nominations for the COC Advisor position. As a non-voting member of the COC, the Advisor ensures that all minority producers are treated fairly and the same as all other producers. Anyone who is interested in the position may be nominated by a minority group or themselves. Please send our office the nomination and a biography of the person by January 1, 2010. This is a one year term that is appointed by the State Committee with a recommendation from the COC, beginning March 1, 2010.

2010 COC ELECTIONS

Eligible voters in LAA 3, which is Jefferson, Calvin, Ontwa, Mason, and Porter Townships, will soon be receiving your ballots to elect the next person to represent them on the COC. Michael Gordon, COC Chairperson, who has represented this LAA for 9 years, has reached the term limit and is not eligible. We would like to thank Mike for all

his hard work over the years for the farmers of Cass County, we will miss him.

Farm Storage Facility Loan Program Changes

The Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program allows producers of eligible commodities to obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities. The new maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL is \$500,000. Participants are now required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with CCC providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent drying and handling equipment. New loan terms of 7, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan. Interest rates for each term rate may be different and are based on the rate which CCC borrows from the Treasury Department. Payments are available in the form of a partial disbursement and the remaining final disbursement. The partial disbursement will be available after a portion of the construction has been completed.

The maximum amount of the partial disbursement will be 50 percent of the projected and approved total loan amount.

Applications for FSFL must be submitted to the FSA county office that maintains the farm's records. An FSFL must be approved before any site preparation or construction can begin.

Dates to Remember

Nov. 11	Office closed for Veteran's Day
Nov. 20	Deadline to purchase NAP for perennial crops
Nov. 26	Office closed for Thanksgiving Day
Continues	Farm Storage Facility Loans
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve Program

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