

January 2014



- Important Dates To Remember
- Farm Record Changes
- Foreign Buyers Notification
- MSU Extension Offers Online Programs for Beginning Farmers
- Microloan Programs
- Selected Interest Rates January 2014

Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, and Leelanau County FSA Updates

Grand Traverse Area FSA Office

1501 Cass Street, Ste A
Traverse City, MI 49684

Phone: 231-941-0951
Fax: 855-292-1667

County Executive Director:
Gregory Shy

Farm Loan Manager:
James L. Monroe
Phone: 231-941-0951

Program Technicians:
Caleb Boge
Janet Howes
Jan Malik

County Committee:
Brent Wagner - Chair
David Noonan - Vice-chair
Bruce Cotton - Member
Joanne Gallagher - Member
Stanley Silverman - Member
Jaunita Send - Advisor

Next County Committee
Meeting: January 23, 2013
at 9:00 AM - Ballot Counting

Important Dates to Remember

- **January 15th** - Final day to submit 2013 production data for APH purposes.
- **January 15th** - Final date to certify perennial orchard crops including Apples, Asparagus, Blueberries, Cherries, Grapes, Juneberries (Saskatoons), Peaches, Plums, and Strawberries.
- **January 17th** - Final date to submit your FSA-669 Election Ballot for County Committee Elections. Ballots postmarked for this date will also be accepted.
- **January 23rd** - Election ballots counted at County Committee meeting.
- **February 1st** - Deadline to certify **Maple Sap** (number of eligible trees & Taps)
- **February 17th** - Office closed in observance of President's Day.
- **February 18th** - Newly elected county committee members take office.
- **March 15th** - Final date to purchase NAP coverage on most spring seeded NAP crops.

Farm Record Changes

Has your farm operation had any of the following happen this winter?

- Purchased new ground
- Dropped/Picked up a new farm
- Ownership changes/transfers
- Changes in cropland acres
- Changes in the structure of your farm operation
- Future plans to clear wooded areas or remove stumps

NOW is the time to report these changes to the Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, and Leelanau County FSA office. These changes must be reported timely in order to prepare for any new program sign-ups as a result of Farm Bill proceedings. Don't delay or jeopardize a potential program enrollment because your records need to be fixed!

Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA within **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 requirements.

For AFIDA purposes, agricultural land is defined as any land used for farming, ranching or timber production, if the tracts total 10 acres or more. The AFIDA reports must be filed with the FSA county office that maintains reports for the county where the land is located.

For more information regarding AFIDA and FSA programs, contact the FSA office near you or visit the USDA Web site at <http://www.usda.gov>

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MSU Extension Offers Online Programs for Beginning Farmers

Beginning Farmer Webinar Series will provide convenient, online learning opportunities in a variety of topics

By [Jim Isleib](#)

A growing number of new farms are appearing across the state of Michigan. Many people starting these farm businesses, or considering it, are new to farming. Others have experience, but are getting started with a new agricultural enterprise. Either way, the 2014 MSU Extension Beginning Farmer Webinar Series will provide convenient, on-line learning opportunities in a variety of topics for the beginner.

The series kicks off with a set of weekly webinars running from Jan. 20 through early April. Each program begins at 7 p.m. eastern time and will last 1-2 hours. Each webinar is a separate program with registration available at <http://msue.anr.msu.edu/> as the webinar date draws nearer. Click the events button at the top of the site and scroll through the programs listed by date to find the webinar programs you are interested in. A \$10 fee is charged for each program, and a high-speed internet connection is required. You will receive the URL for each program when you register.

Microloan Programs

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.

Individuals who are interested in applying for a microloan or would like to discuss other farm loan programs available should contact their local FSA office to set up an appointment with a loan official.

Selected Interest Rates January 2014

- 90-Day Treasury Bill: .125%
- Farm Operating Loans - Direct: 1.875%
- Farm Ownership Loans - Direct: 4.125%
- Farm Ownership Loans - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher: 1.50%
- Emergency Loans: 2.875%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years): 2.250%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (10 years): 2.875%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans (12 years): 3.000%
- Marketing Assistance Loans: 1.125%

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).