

Gratiot County USDA Service Center

Gratiot County FSA
301 Commerce Dr.
Ithaca, MI 48847
(989) 875-3900 (phone)
(989) 875-4500 (fax)
www.fsa.usda.gov/mi

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

County Committee
Scott Apple
Olan Humm
Doreen Slavik
Andrea Ackels

Gratiot County
Committee meets
the 2nd Wednesday of
each month

Staff
Melissa Dettloff, PT
Teri Hedrick, PT
Nancy Holland, PT
Sandy McCrimmon, PT
Jeff Pearsall, PT
Kay Perkins, PT
Teresa Stewart, FLO
Jon LaPorte, SFLO
Steve Markley, CED

Field Reporters:
Ray Kindel
Dave Wright



CRP General Sign-up Announced

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general sign-up will begin on March 12, 2012 and continue through April 6, 2012.

CRP assists farmers and landowners by using land for conservation benefits. The general sign-up allows producers, if accepted, to enroll entire fields in the program.

CRP contract holders will plant long-term covers and/or trees in exchange for rental payments, cost-share assistance and technical assistance. Land is removed from agricultural production by entering into contracts of 10 to 15 years.

Interested producers must contact the FSA office no later than April 6th. Eligibility requirements must be met prior to submitting a bid. Interested producers and landowners are encouraged to contact FSA to ensure all deadlines are met.

Crop Year 2012 Reconstitutions

In program terminology, farms are constituted to group all tracts having the same owner and the same operator under one farm serial number. When changes in ownership or operation take place, a farm reconstitution may be necessary. The reconstitution - or recon - is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. To be effective for the current year, recons must be requested by August 1st for farms enrolled in DCP and ACRE.

A recon must have the concurrence and signature of the owner or owners on the farm involved. If a DCP or ACRE contract already exists, a recon cancels it and another has to be initiated.

Remember, for FSA to better serve you, please request your recon as soon as you're aware there will be a change.

Farm Operating Changes in 2012?

Inform the FSA office of 2012 farm record changes prior to signing up for DCP and ACRE.

Changes requiring FSA notification are:

- dropping or picking up rented farmland
- buying or selling land
- modifications in crop share arrangements
(Note: New leases will be required for cash rented farms)
- address changes
- cropland removed for housing or barns
- farm operating plan (eligibility) adjustments - such as creating a trust, partnership, LLC, or corporation, or modification of members' shares within an entity

This information is also needed to transfer CRP contracts to new owners.

It is critical these changes are addressed as soon as you're aware and before your program sign-up appointment. This will help eliminate customers' additional trips to FSA and unproductive time in the office. Current records make sign-up more accurate and efficient.

CRP Acreage Reporting

For 2012 crop year, CRP acreage can be reported now. It is best to call ahead or to make an appointment with a staff member. The budget is significantly impacting our resources and acreage reports will not be mailed to CRP participants for signatures. There have been past misunderstandings in this area. This serves notice it's the producer's responsibility to report crops on acreage under their control. CRP acreage must be reported by the contract holder, a spouse, or someone with a valid FSA power of attorney on file. The deadline to certify CRP for 2012 is July 15th.

2012 Dates to Remember

The following are important deadline dates for producers for the 2012 crop year:

<u>March 12th</u>	First day to apply for CRP General Sign-Up
<u>March 15th</u>	Deadline to purchase NAP coverage for most spring planted crops
<u>March 31st</u>	Final date to request a loan (or LDP) on 2011 small grains and honey
<u>April 6th</u>	Deadline to accept applications for enrollment under CRP general sign-up (<i>begins March 12th</i>)
<u>May 31st</u>	Final date to request a loan (or LDP) on 2011 feed grains and oilseeds (<i>corn & soybeans</i>)
<u>June 1st</u>	Deadline to apply for 2012 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) or ACRE Election
<u>June 1st</u>	Deadline to apply for 2010 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE)
<u>June 4th</u>	Deadline to report prevented planting sugar beets
<u>June 20th</u>	Deadline to report prevented planting corn
<u>June 30th</u>	Deadline to certify fall-seeded small grains (<i>wheat</i>)
<u>June 30th</u>	Deadline to report prevented planting soybeans
<u>July 15th</u>	Deadline to certify all spring planted crops & CRP, except fall-seeded small grains
<u>July 15th</u>	Deadline to file 2011 FSA-658, Record of Production, on farms enrolled in ACRE
<u>August 1st</u>	Deadline to request 2012 crop year reconstitution
<u>September 30th</u>	Deadline to apply for Milk Income Loss Contract Program (MILC)
<u>November 9th</u>	Deadline to report prevented planted wheat for 2013 crop year



****New for 2013 Crop Year****

November 15th **New** deadline to certify fall-seeded small grains, including winter wheat, and perennial forage (alfalfa and alfalfa mix)

Buying or Selling Land?

If you're buying or selling farmland, be aware of some program consequences. Here are some examples of situations FSA commonly encounters:

Selling Land with CRP Contract:

If you're planning to sell land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program, the buyer must agree to continue the enrollment or the seller (as the contract holder) may have to refund all payments received to date. Be advised to address this issue prior to a land sale agreement or land auction.

Land Enrolled in ACRE:

Also, land currently enrolled in the ACRE program must remain in ACRE after a sale has taken place.

Reviewing program implications with the Farm Service Agency staff before completing a sale of farmland is always a sensible precaution.

Banking Changes?



Please notify our office if you make any changes to your banking account. This would include closing your own account, closing the account for a deceased relative, changing the account the deposit goes into, bank mergers, and routing number or account number adjustments. Attempting to make direct deposits into closed accounts will often cause long delays in the payment process.

Promptly provide the county office with this information to avoid payment delay.

DCP/ACRE Sign-up

2012 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) enrollment runs from Jan. 23, 2012 through June 1, 2012. Here are some IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

- All producers planting on **DCP base** acres must be identified on the DCP/ACRE contract and receive a proportionate share of DCP/ACRE payment for the farm.
- Changes on the farm after enrolling June 1st in DCP/ACRE **must** be reported to your local FSA office such as:
 - Ownership changes
 - Producer changes (Individuals and Entities)
 - Change in crop shares arrangements
- There are no advanced payments for 2012; the entire DCP payment will be disbursed in October



Note: Changes cannot be made after Sept. 30, 2012.

Land Leases

Copies of leases supplied to FSA and used for DCP or ACRE program sign-up must include the following information:

- Signature dates
- Length of lease (if multiple year lease, list number of years)
- Must have land owner and operator's names printed, along with signatures
- Type of lease

It is also very helpful to list township, section, and acres. FSA cannot provide any type of leasing statements or templates of leases to producers. It is the producer's responsibility to supply rental agreements.

Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE)

The sign-up for 2010 SURE losses continue through **June 1, 2012**.

The Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disasters that incurred in the crop year 2010. SURE is available to eligible producers on:

- Farms in counties with Secretarial disaster declarations, including contiguous counties, that have incurred crop production or quality losses, or both, and includes all crops grown by a producer nationwide, except grazed crops
- Any farm in which, for the crop year, the actual production on the farm because of disaster-related conditions is 50 percent or less than normal production of the farm.



Rural Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency makes loans to rural youths to establish and operate income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5,000.

Spousal Signatures

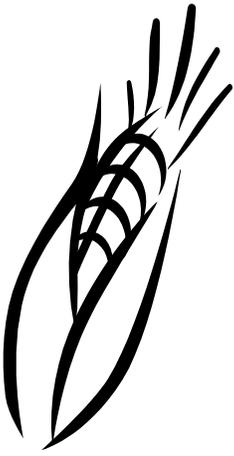
Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office staff by either spouse.

There are exceptions to the rule, where spouses may not sign on behalf of each other for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities.

When signing Average Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) Certification and Consent to Disclosure of Tax Information, form CCC-931, a spouse cannot sign in a representative capacity. Individual signatures are also required on certain Farm Loan Program and Farm Storage Facility Loan documents.

For more clarification on spousal signature authority, please contact the FSA office.

Farm Loan Programs



The Farm Service Agency is committed to providing family farmers with loans to meet their farm credit needs. If you are having trouble getting the credit you need for your farm, or regularly borrow from FSA, direct and guaranteed loans are currently available.

Ask your lender about an FSA loan guarantee if you've had a setback and your lender is reluctant to extend or renew your loan. Farm ownership loans or farm operating loans may be obtained as direct loans for a maximum of up to \$300,000. Guaranteed loans have a maximum limit of \$1,214,000. This makes the maximum combination of direct and guaranteed loan indebtedness \$1,514,000.

The one-time loan origination fee charged on FSA guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans has increased from 1 percent to 1.5 percent of the guaranteed portion of the loan, for loans obligated after October 1, 2011.

To find out more about FSA loan programs, contact the county office staff.

Wetland Provisions

Potential violations of the wetland rules include bringing new land into production by clearing trees (including fence rows) or improving drainage by tiling or dredging. **Before you BEGIN any of these projects, you need to fill out form AD-1026.**

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will complete a certified evaluation of the tract to determine if there are areas that are wet and highly erodible. This process takes *at least* 60 days to complete. NRCS will notify you by mail of the results.

With the new mapping system, updated imagery clearly shows where land has been cleared or drained. The penalty for a wetland violation can be loss of **All** USDA benefits back to the year of conversion. By checking with our office before you start a project, you can remain in compliance and avoid the penalties. Plan ahead, sign form AD-1026 and get your determination completed before clearing trees and/or tiling.



NAP Coverage Deadline

Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) is available for spring seeded 2012 crops for which Catastrophic level crop insurance is not available. March 15th is the NAP application closing date for most 2012 vegetable and dry bean crops. This date is unchanged from recent years. Producers who had coverage on 2011 NAP crops may choose to continue coverage on the same crop or crops for 2012 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 or delete crops from the previous year's coverage, or are changing shares for 2011, must file a new CCC-471 with signatures.

If you carried NAP coverage in 2011, please remember to provide your production to the FSA office. This is required for all crops which are covered under a NAP policy.

To remain compliant in NAP, producers must: 1) timely file acreage reports; 2) follow HEL and Wetland conservation compliance requirements; 3) file Notice of Loss within 15 days of weather damage or within 15 days of the loss becoming apparent; 4) request loss adjustment appraisals if any crop will not be harvested or to document production left in the field; and 5) provide true and complete production records for the unit.



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, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.