

July 2014



NEWSLETTER



- [County Committee Election Nomination Period Ends August 1st](#)
- [Certify Your Crops!](#)
- [Land Contract \(LC\) Guarantees](#)
- [Make an Appointment with FSA to Save Time](#)
- [Controlled Substance](#)
- [Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Compliance](#)

Gratiot County FSA Updates

Gratiot County FSA Office

301 Commerce Drive
Ithaca, MI 48847-1602

County Executive Director:
Steve Markley

Program Technicians:
Ben Belkholm
Melissa Dettloff
Jeff Pearsall
Kay Perkins

Farm Loan Officer:
Gerald Wagler

Program Technician:
Teri Hedrick

Gratiot County Committee:
Scott Apple
Doreen Slavik
Andrea Ackels

Next County Committee Meeting: Tentatively set for August 27th at 8:00 am

County Committee Election Nomination Period Ends August 1st

The Gratiot FSA Office is accepting nominations for producers to serve on the County Committee (COC) for Local Administrative Area (LAA) #1, consisting of **Seville, Pine River, Bethany, Sumner, and Arcada** Townships.

If you are a landowner or producer living in that area, or would like to nominate someone else who is a landowner or producer in the area to serve on the Gratiot COC, please contact our office to obtain a nomination form. *All nominations must be received before close of business on **August 1st 2014.***

The Gratiot COC meets quarterly to discuss matters related to the delivery and administration of Farm Service Agency Farm Bill Programs. Please contact our office with any questions.

Certify Your Crops!

The deadline for crop acreage reporting and certification for most spring-seeded crops was **July 15, 2014**. Please contact the Gratiot FSA office as soon as possible to set up an appointment, even if you did not make it to the office before July 15th. FSA recommends all producers certify crops, just as you have in the past. Programs are on their way in the near future that may be dependent on your 2014 crop certification.

Call now to get an appointment.

Land Contract (LC) Guarantees

The Land Contract (LC) Guarantee Program is a valuable tool to transfer farm real estate to the next generation of farmers and ranchers. Guarantees will be offered to the owner of a farm who wishes to sell real estate through a land contract to a beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher. The guarantee reduces the financial risk to the seller.

FSA offers two types of guarantees:

(continued)

- Prompt Payment Guarantee - A guarantee up to the amount of three amortized annual installments plus the cost of any related real estate taxes and insurance.
- Standard Guarantee - A guarantee of 90 percent of the outstanding principal balance under the land contract.

The guarantee period is 10 years and the contract payments must be amortized for a minimum of 20 years. The purchase price of the farm cannot exceed the lesser of \$500,000 or the market value of the property.

For additional information you can read the [Land Contract Guarantee Program Fact Sheet](#).

Make an Appointment with FSA to Save Time

As we roll out the Farm Bill programs administered by FSA, there will be related signups and in some cases multiple management decisions that need to be made by you, the producer, in consult with FSA staff. To insure maximum use of your time and to insure that you are afforded our full attention to your important business needs, please call our office ahead of your visit to set an appointment and to discuss any records or documentation that you may need to have with you when you arrive for your appointment. This will save you time and possibly save you multiple trips to our office. For local FSA Service Center contact information, please visit: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>.

Controlled Substance

Any person convicted under federal or state law of a controlled substance violation could be ineligible for USDA payments or benefits. Violations include planting, harvesting or growing a prohibited plant. Prohibited plants include marijuana, opium, poppies and other drug producing plants.

Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Compliance

Landowners and operators are reminded that in order to receive payments from USDA, they must be compliant with Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions. Please remember these are two separate and different determinations.

Farmers with HEL determined soils must apply tillage, crop residue and rotation requirements as specified in their conservation plan.

Producers should notify FSA prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to ensure compliance. If you intend to clear any trees to create new cropland, these areas will need to be reviewed to ensure any work will not jeopardize your eligibility for benefits. This includes clearing fencerows to clean up field perimeters or corners.

Landowners and operators can complete form AD-1026 Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification to determine whether a referral to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is necessary.

For more information on Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation provisions, contact a FSA County Office or visit the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov.

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).