

January 2014



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## Kent County FSA Updates

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### Kent County FSA Office

3260 Eagle Park Dr. NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49525

Phone: 616-942-4111  
Fax: 855-729-8875

**County Executive Director:**  
David Bain

**Farm Loan Manager:**  
Paul Wagner

**Program Technicians:**  
Richard Dunton  
Nina Zick  
Debbie Diehl

**Next County Committee Meeting:** To be determined

### 2013 County Committee (COC) Election Results:

Congratulations to Ronald Alt! Ron was re-elected in Local Administrative Area (LAA) 2 on the county committee representing the producers of Tyrone, Solon, Sparta, Algoma, Alpine, Walker, Grand Rapids, and Ada Townships. Ron was elected to his 2nd consecutive term.

#### The election results for LAA 2 are:

**Ronald Alt — Elected to the COC,**

**Jason Bradford — 1st alternate to COC,**

**James May — 2nd alternate to COC**

The 2014 COC election will be for LAA 3 which represents Vergennes, Wyoming, Kentwood, Cascade, Lowell, Byron, Gaines, Caledonia, and Bowne Townships.

FSA appreciates all of the voters for taking the time to complete the election ballot. The county committee system works only because of your participation.

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## Physical Loss Notification N1146

Effective January 2, 2014, seven Michigan counties were designated as a natural disaster area where eligible farmers may qualify for Farm Service Agency (FSA) emergency (EM) loans due to physical damage to farm structures, buildings, barns, fruit trees and death of livestock losses caused by high winds that occurred November 17 through November 19, 2013.

Those counties are: Barry, Berrien, Cass, Jackson, Mecosta, Montcalm, Newaygo

In addition, 22 Michigan counties are named as contiguous disaster counties where eligible family farmers may qualify for FSA emergency physical loss loan assistance, pursuant to section 321 (a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act. Those counties are:

Allegan, Gratiot, Kalamazoo, Livingston, Osceola, Calhoun, Hillsdale, Kent, Mason, St. Joseph, Clare, Ingham, Lake, Muskegon, Van Buren, Clinton, Ionia, Lenawee, Oceana, Washtenaw, Eaton, Isabella.

EM loan applications will be received through September 2, 2014, for severe physical losses only.

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## Secretarial Disaster Designation S3622

Effective January 23, 2014, 27 Michigan counties were designated as natural disaster areas where eligible family farmers may qualify for Farm Service Agency (FSA) emergency (EM) loans due to losses caused by excessive rain and cooler than normal temperatures that occurred during the period of April 1, 2013 and continuing. Kent County is a contiguous county to the primary counties, making farm operators in Kent County eligible to be considered for low-interest emergency loans from FSA, pursuant to Section 321(a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act.

Emergency loan applications will be received through September 23, 2014. For more information about emergency loans, please contact Paul Wagner, Farm Loan Officer, @ 616-527-2098, or visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## Breaking New Ground

Agricultural producers are reminded to consult with FSA and NRCS before breaking out new ground for production as doing so without prior authorization may put a producer's federal farm program benefits in jeopardy. This is especially true for land that must meet Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions.

Producers 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 risk your eligibility for benefits.

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.

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## Farming Operation Changes

Producers who have bought or sold land, or added or dropped rented land from their operation must report those changes to the FSA office as soon as possible. A copy of the deed or recorded land contract for purchase property is needed to maintain accurate records with FSA. Failure to do so can lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties. While making record updates, be sure to update signature authorizations. Making record changes now will save time in the spring.

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## Bank Account Changes

Current policy mandates that FSA payments be electronically transferred into a bank account. Producers need to provide an original voided check to their FSA county office when an account has been changed. Payments can be delayed if the FSA office is not aware of updates to bank accounts and routing numbers.

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## **Requesting Special Accommodations**

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact the county FSA office staff directly or by phone.

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## **Appeal Process**

After an FSA official makes a decision on a request for USDA services or application, the producer will be sent a letter informing him/her of the decision and options that can be pursued.

Generally, program participants have three choices — an informal review with the original agency decision-maker, an opportunity for mediation and finally an appeal to the next level of authority within the agency.

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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).