

June 2014



# NEWSLETTER



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## Menominee, Dickinson Iron FSA Updates

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Menominee Dickinson  
Iron FSA Office  
E106 South Drive  
Stephenson MI 49887 8845

906 753 6921 - phone  
855 663 1382 - fax

### Hours

Monday – Friday  
8:00 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.

**County Executive Director:**  
Susan K. DeVoe

**Farm Loan Officer:**  
Bruce Stephenson

**Program Technicians:**  
Denise Wilson  
Haili Thoney  
Jennifer Micheau

**County Committee Members:**  
Brad Pellegrini, Chair  
Robert Hanchek, Vice Chair  
Janis Linderoth, Member  
Ken Piwarski, Member  
Roy Forray, Member  
Renee Revall, Advisor

**Next County Committee Meeting:**

Tuesday, August 5, 2014

### **2014 ACREAGE REPORTING DATES**

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit the Menominee, Dickinson, Iron County FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline. **July 15, 2014 is the deadline to file a crop certification for all spring seeded crops such as corn, oats, barley, soybeans, spring wheat, pumpkins, triticale, rye, potatoes, cabbage planted before May 31st, grain and forage sorghum, cane berries, apples, canola, strawberries, and sugar beets.**

**August 15, 2014 is the date for cabbage planted after June 1<sup>st</sup>.**

**September 30, 2014 is the date for Aquaculture, Christmas Trees, Floriculture, Ginseng, Mushrooms, Nursery, and Turfgrass Sod.**

For questions regarding crop certification and to schedule an appointment, please contact the County FSA office at 906 753 6921 Ext 2.

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendars days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.
- If a perennial forage crop is reported with the intended use of “cover only,” “green manure,” “left standing,” or “seed,” then the acreage must be reported by July 15th.

## **USDA ANNOUNCES CHANGES TO FRUIT, VEGETABLE AND WILD RICE PLANTING RULES**

Farm Service Agency (FSA) has announced fruit, vegetable and wild rice provisions that affect producers who intend to participate in certain programs authorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014. Producers who intend to participate in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs are subject to an acre-for-acre payment reduction when fruits and nuts, vegetables or wild rice are planted on the payment acres of a farm. Payment reductions do not apply to mung beans, dry peas, lentils or chickpeas. Planting fruits, vegetables or wild rice on acres that are not considered payment acres will not result in a payment reduction.

Farms that are eligible to participate in ARC/PLC but are not enrolled for a particular year may plant unlimited fruits, vegetables and wild rice for that year but will not receive ARC/PLC payments for that year. Eligibility for succeeding years is not affected.

Planting and harvesting fruits, vegetables and wild rice on ARC/PLC acreage is subject to the acre-for-acre payment reduction when those crops are planted on either more than 15 percent of the base acres of a farm enrolled in ARC using the county coverage or PLC, or more than 35 percent of the base acres of a farm enrolled in ARC using the individual coverage.

Fruits, vegetables and wild rice that are planted in a double-cropping practice will not cause a payment reduction if the farm is in a double-cropping region as designated by the USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation.

## **USDA ANNOUNCES RESTART OF THE BIOMASS CROP ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

The Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) was reauthorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and will resume on a limited basis upon the publication of a Notice of Funding Availability.

BCAP employs three types of biomass assistance primarily through approved BCAP project areas. For growing new biomass, BCAP provides financial assistance with 50 percent of the cost of establishing a perennial crop. To maintain the crop as it matures until harvest, BCAP provides an annual payment for up to 5 years for herbaceous crops, or up to 15 years for woody crops. To collect existing agriculture or forest residues that are not economically retrievable, BCAP provides assistance with mitigating the cost of harvesting and transporting the materials to the end-use facility.

The 2014 Farm Bill authorizes \$25 million annually for BCAP, requiring between 10 and 50 percent of the total funding to be used for harvest and transportation of biomass residues. Traditional food and feed crops are ineligible for assistance. The 2014 Farm Bill also enacted several modifications for BCAP, including higher incentives for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, and narrower biomass qualifications for matching payments, among other changes.

Only the matching payments portion of the BCAP, with narrower biomass qualifications, will resume this summer. Additional information will be provided as the updated BCAP regulations and policies are implemented. With the 2014 Farm Bill requiring several regulatory updates to BCAP, the resumption of establishment and annual payments has been deferred until a later date.

For forest residues, this year's matching payments are targeted for energy generation while reducing fire, insect and disease threats on Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands. Agriculture residues for energy are also eligible for matching payments.

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), which administers BCAP, will coordinate the BCAP enrollments. For more information on BCAP and other FSA programs, visit a local FSA office or go online to [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

## **USDA AWARDING \$6 MILLION TO PREPARE FARMERS FOR NEW FARM BILL PROGRAMS**

USDA is awarding \$6 million to universities and cooperative state extension services to develop online decision tools and other materials and train experts to educate producers about several key farm bill programs. The new Web tools will help farmers and ranchers determine what participation in programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill will mean for their businesses.

The University of Illinois (lead for the National Coalition for Producer Education), along with the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute (FAPRI) at the University of Missouri and the Agricultural and Food Policy Center at Texas A&M (co-leads for the National Association of Agricultural and Food Policy), will receive a total of \$3 million to develop the new online tools and train state-based extension agents who can in turn help educate farmers.

The new resources will help farmers and ranchers make an educated choice between the new Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) program and the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program. Using the new online tools, producers will be able to use data unique to their specific farming operations combined with factors like the geographical diversity of crops, soils, weather and climates across the country to test a variety of financial scenarios before officially signing up for the new program options later this year. Once a producer enrolls in the ARC or PLC program, he or she must remain in the program through the 2018 crop year.

New tools will be provided for other programs as well. Sign-up for the newly established Margin Protection Program for Dairy (MPP) begins late this summer and enrollment for "buy-up" provisions under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) will begin early next year. An online MPP tool will be available when sign up begins and the NAP buy-up provision resource will become available to producers in the fall for the 2015 crop year.

USDA will also award \$3 million to state cooperative extension services—a nationwide network of experts based at land-grant universities—for outreach and education on the new Farm Bill programs. Funds will be used to conduct public education outreach meetings where producers can speak with local extension agents and Farm Service Agency (FSA) staff. Outreach meetings will begin late this summer to help farmers and ranchers understand the new programs and their options.

While universities work to create new online tools, producers now have access to a preliminary website that gives them a chance to begin familiarizing themselves with the new programs and the type of information they will need to consider when deciding which program options work better for them. At this site, farmers and ranchers can view ARC and PLC projected payments, ARC guarantees, and PLC payment rate projections. These tables are available on the [FSA website](#).

Visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov) or the local FSA office for information about FSA and the 2014 Farm Bill programs.

## **GUARANTEED LOAN ELIGIBILITY CHANGE**

Changes to FSA regulations have removed Guaranteed Operating Loan term limits. Previous and current guaranteed loan borrowers who were not eligible for further guaranteed loans due to the previous 15 year eligibility term limit may now be eligible for further guaranteed loans through their commercial lender.

## **DIRECT LOAN CHANGES**

Changes were made to the interest rate charged on loans where FSA provides 50 percent or less on jointly financed purchases of real estate also called Direct Farm Ownership Participation Loans. The interest rate will be the greater of 2.5 percent or the current interest rate for direct Farm Ownership loans minus 2 percent, as a fixed rate for the duration of the loan. At present, the June direct Farm Ownership rate is 4.00 percent. Because the 2.5 percent floor is greater than subtracting 2 percent from the current direct farm ownership loan rate, the rate for Direct Farm Ownership Participation Loans in June is 2.50 percent.

## **SAVE TIME – MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH FSA**

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. For local FSA Service Center contact information, please visit: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app> .

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).