



Monroe County News

November 2009

Issue No. 3

Monroe County FSA Service Center

1137 S. Telegraph Rd.
Monroe, MI 48161
734-241-8540 (phone)
734-241-9432 (fax)
www.fsa.usda.gov/mi

Hours

Monday – Friday
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

County Committee

James VanBuskirk
Carmen L. Cousino
Richard Janssens

County Committee meets
8:30 AM, 3rd Wednesday of
the month

Staff

Paul Manol
County Executive Director
Ext. 107

Farm Program Techs

Carole Bogoski Ext. 110
Dawn Pluff Ext. 113
Roger Bezek Ext. 108
Jessica Squires Ext. 109

Field Reporter

Rachel Bakowski

Farm Loan Manager

Michael Jordon
(Lenawee County)
517-263-7400, x110

Dates to Remember

Nov 11 - Office closed for the
Observance of Veterans Day
Nov 20 - NAP sales closing
date for perennial crops
Nov 26 - Office Closed for the
Observance of Thanksgiving
Dec 1 - NAP sales closing date
for honey and maple sap.
Dec 10 - Election ballots
counted
Dec 25 - Office Closed for
Observance of Christmas.
Continues - Farm Storage
Facility Loans
Continues - Continuous Con-
servation Reserve Program &
CRP-SAFE

Payment Processing

With the passage of the new farm bill in 2008, several changes were made in how eligibility is determined. Software changes were also made. These changes affect anyone who receives program payments from the Farm Service Agency. Changes include:

- Statements are now sent directly from Kansas City.
- Final direct payments for DCP will show reductions for any advance payment you requested and received earlier this year.
- The sum of ALL advance payments you received will be totaled and subtracted from the first farm(s) that are processed.
- Once the advance payments are all accounted for, you will receive 100% of the annual payment on all subsequent farms. (No deduction for advances).
- All payments may also have a short delay in processing in order to search for any outstanding Federal debt.
- If an outstanding Federal debt is discovered, the payment will be applied to offset the debt.
- Direct Deposit payments made by FSA will show up as **FSA TREAS 310** on your bank statement.

As with any “new & improved” system, it takes time getting used to some changes. This is no exception. Therefore, we ask for your patience as we all get used to the new system for processing payments. Rest assured that payments will all be made.

Appointments

We continue to highly recommend you call to make an appointment before coming to the office to conduct business. This will enable us to prepare any necessary paperwork and research issues before your appointment. We realize how important your time is and this will reduce the amount of time that you have to wait in the office.

County Committee Election

As a reminder, be watching your mailbox for your official county office committee election ballot. They will be mailed to all eligible voters starting November 6, 2009. We have three candidates who seek to represent producers in Local Administrative Area # 3, which includes Dundee,



Raisinville, Frenchtown, Monroe & Lasalle Townships. They are (in alphabetical order): **John A. Gaynier; Richard A. Janssens,** (incumbant); and **Shirley M. Revels.**

If you don't receive a ballot, please call the office. Completed and signed ballots are due back in the County Office by close of business on December 7, 2009, and will be counted at the County Office on December 10, 2009.

Reporting Changes in Your Farm Operations

It is important that you contact the office with any record changes that may have occurred in your operation. These changes include, but are not limited to:

- Address - any contact information.
- Direct Deposit - to ensure payments are deposited correctly, it is imperative that any changes in bank account information are updated immediately.
- Development - land removed for houses, etc., needs to be reported.
- Owner/Operator Changes - changes in land ownership, tenants or crop share arrangements. (**Note: We will require NEW LEASES!**)
- Reconstitutions - farm and/or tract combinations or separations due to sale of land or change in operators.
- Farm Operating Plan - changes to the farming operation that may have an effect on “person” and/or “actively engaged” determinations (eligibility).



Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP)

FSA is currently accepting applications from biomass facilities interested in participating in the Biomass Crop Assistance Program

Once an agreement is signed between FSA and a facility and funding through the program is provided, the facilities can begin accepting materials. Producers who sell these materials can apply for matching payments under the collection, harvest, storage and transportation (CHST) component of BCAP.

The matching CHST payments are paid at a rate of \$1 for \$1 per dry-ton equivalent received from a qualified biomass conversion facility, not to exceed \$45 per dry-ton equivalent. A biomass owner is eligible to receive payments for two years. The purpose of the matching payments is to assist biomass producers with the CHST cost of delivering biomass to a qualified biomass conversion facility. Once a facility becomes qualified, eligible material owners or producers who deliver biomass to that facility may be eligible to receive CHST payments.

Eligible material owners or producers, who market eligible material to a qualified biomass conversion facility, may apply for the matching CHST payment at their FSA county office. An application must be submitted before the eligible material is sold and delivered to a qualified biomass conversion facility. After the product is delivered, a producer must provide FSA with documentation of product quantity, quality and payment rate. County offices will validate payment requests with information in the county office and information provided under the terms of MOUs with the qualified biomass conversion facilities. CHST payments will not be authorized until after an appropriate environmental analysis has been conducted.

Biomass conversion facilities and material owners or producers should contact their FSA state offices or visit www.fsa.usda.gov for more information.

Farm Storage Facility Loan Program Changes

The Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program allows producers of eligible commodities to obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities.

The new maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL is \$500,000. Participants are now required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with CCC providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent drying and handling equipment. New loan terms of 7, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan. Interest rates for each term rate may be different and are based on the rate which CCC borrows from the Treasury Department.

Payments are available in the form of a partial disbursement and the remaining final disbursement. The partial disbursement will be available after a portion of the construction has been completed. The final fund disbursement will be made when all construction is completed. The maximum amount of the partial disbursement will be 50 percent of the projected and approved total loan amount.

Applications for FSFL must be submitted to the FSA county office that maintains the farm's records. An FSFL must be approved before any site preparation or construction can begin. The following commodities are eligible for farm storage facility loans:

- Corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley or minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain
- Corn, grain sorghum, wheat, oats or barley harvested as other-than-whole grain
- Pulse crops - lentils, small chickpeas and dry peas
- Hay
- Renewable biomass
- Fruits (including nuts) and vegetables - cold storage facilities

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

At this time USDA has no general signups scheduled for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). However, environmentally sensitive acreage qualifying for the Conservation Reserve Program's State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Practice and Continuous CRP are still be eligible for enrollment. These targeted programs remain funded, and continue to provide heightened environmental and financial benefits to select areas.



Continuous CRP

The Continuous Conservation Reserve Program is a private lands environmental improvement program allowing participants the opportunity to enroll environmentally sensitive acreages in conservation practices that will reduce soil erosion, improve water / soil quality and provide wildlife habitat and food sources. The Continuous CRP program is a voluntary enrollment program. Eligible landowners enter into contracts that range from 10 to 15 years in length. In return, the landowners receive annual rental / maintenance payments, incentive payments for certain activities, & cost share for establishment.

To be eligible for enrollment in the Continuous CRP, participants and acreage must meet certain requirements. Provided the eligibility requirements are met, FSA will automatically accept enrollments of acreage into Continuous CRP. Landowners may enroll in the program at any time during the year.

For more information on Continuous CRP enrollments, please contact your local FSA office.

Sodbuster and Swampbuster Provisions

Most USDA programs require compliance with sodbuster and swampbuster provisions. These provisions require producers to follow an approved conservation system on highly erodible land planted to an annual crop, as determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). USDA participants are prohibited from converting wetlands for agricultural production purposes and planting an agricultural commodity on converted wetlands, as determined by NRCS. Be sure to have determinations made on any new land you plan to plant to annual crops. Swampbuster provisions state that converting a wetland to make possible the planting of a crop will result in the loss of all USDA benefits. To avoid this possibility it is strongly recommended that producers come into the FSA office ahead of time to file an AD-1026 for referral to NRCS. **It is necessary for NRCS to review any actions which could result in the modification of an area determined wet.** This includes any clearing of trees or brush (including fence rows), draining, dredging, filling, or plans to install, maintain or improve tile.

ECP Funds Available

The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) provides emergency funding and technical assistance for farmers and landowners to rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters and for carrying out emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought. Producers can use ECP funds for a variety of purposes, including removal of farmland debris,

restoring fences and repairing conservation structures. FSA county committees determine land eligibility based on on-site inspections of damage, taking into account the type and extent of damage. For land to be eligible, the natural disaster must create new conservation problems that:

- untreated, will impair or endanger the land;
- materially affect the land's productive capacity;
- represent unusual damage that, except for wind erosion, is not of the type likely to recur frequently in the same area;
- would be so costly to repair that federal assistance is or will be required to return the land to productive agricultural use.

All of the above conditions must be met for eligibility. Conservation problems existing prior to the disaster are not eligible for cost-share assistance.

Producers should check with their local county FSA offices regarding ECP sign-up periods.

Monroe FSA Office
1137 S. Telegraph Rd.
Monroe, MI 48161



PRESORTED STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
LANSING, MI
PERMIT #19

Beginning and Limited Resource Farmers

FSA assists beginning farmers and or members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more that 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's median size.

Each member of an entity must meet the eligibility requirements. Loan approval is not guaranteed. Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit www.fsa.usda.gov

ACRE Production Reporting

Producers participating in the ACRE program must report their actual crop yields for 2009. Acceptable documentation includes:

- Receipts of crops sold (warehouse receipts, settlement sheets, sales documents, etc.)
- Appraisal performed by crop insurance
- Paid measurement of bins or other farm storage

Please call if you chop corn for silage. We will help you determine when appraisals are necessary. Note that actual farm yields must be reported by the **subsequent crop year's** acreage reporting deadline. (June 30 for fall seeded crops, July 15 for spring seeded crops).

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

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, please contact Paul Manol (734) 241-8540, by phone or in person.