

January 2013



St. Clair/Macomb County FSA Updates

St. Clair/Macomb County COUNTY COMMITTEE NEWS

FSA Office

2830 Wadhams Rd
Kimball, MI 48074-1403

Phone: 810-984-3865 x2

Fax: 810-984-2345

The committee members held their organizational meeting on January 8, 2013 via conference call, at that time Ronald Beier was elected as Chairperson and John Busemann was elected as Vice Chairperson for 2013.

County Executive

Director:

Dean E. Forrester

The USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) mailed the 2012 Census of Agriculture during the last week of December and is asking for the help of farmers and ranchers in collecting accurate data.

Program Technicians:

Brenda M Boyd
Ellen Wilson
Steve Simmons
Karla Frammolino

The Census of Agriculture is only conducted once every five years and captures a count of all U.S. farms, ranches and those who operate them. Everyone who receives a Census form is required to return the Census form, even if they no longer farm or have never been involved in agriculture. Retired operators who own land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) are counted as farms and should complete the Census form.

Farm Loan Manager:

David J Hemker
810-230-8766
or
810 648-2998

Results of the Census are used by USDA, university research and extension, state and local officials, agribusinesses, farm organizations and commodity groups to make important policy and business decisions that impact people across the nation.

Please return the Census by February 4, 2013. Producers can also complete the Census online at www.agcensus.usda.gov after receiving the Census form through the mail. Information reported by producers is confidential. The results of the Census show the strength and diversity of U.S. agriculture. Your answers to the Census can help grow your farm future, shape farm programs and boost services for you, your community and your industry. For questions or help completing the Census, contact NASS at (888) 424-7828.

2011 SUPPLEMENTAL REVENUE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM APPLICATIONS

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) will continue to accept SURE applications for 2011 crop losses through June 7, 2013. Under the 2008 Farm Bill, SURE authorizes assistance to farmers and ranchers who suffered crop losses caused by natural disasters occurring through Sept. 30, 2011.

During 2011, St Clair and Macomb counties received a Secretarial Disaster Designation, whether primary or contiguous, and producers are eligible to apply for SURE benefits if they experienced at least a 10 percent production loss that affects one crop of economic significance.

To meet program eligibility requirements, producers must have obtained a policy or plan of insurance through the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation or obtained Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for all economically significant crops. Eligible farmers and ranchers who meet the definition of a socially disadvantaged, limited resource or beginning farmer or rancher do not have to meet this requirement. Forage crops intended for grazing are not eligible for SURE benefits.

For more information on SURE program eligibility requirements contact your local FSA office or visit the website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/sure>.

NONINSURED CROP DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (NAP)

The noninsured crop disaster assistance program (NAP) is a federally funded program that helps producers reduce their risk when growing food and fiber crops, specialty crops and crops for livestock feed. These benefits are only available for crops for which the catastrophic level of crop insurance is not available. Application for coverage must be filed by the applicable crop's application closing date.

Production records for all crops must be reported to FSA no later than the acreage reporting date for the crop for the following year. FSA requires that any production reported in a loss year be verifiable according to Agency specifications. NAP Losses must be reported within 15 days of the date the loss became apparent.

The following crops have a NAP application closing date of March 15, 2013: beans, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, guar, melons (cantaloupe, honeydew, watermelon, etc.), millet, okra, peanuts, peas, pecans, peppers, potatoes, pumpkins, sesame, sorghum, sorghum forage, soybeans, squash, sunflowers and tomatoes.

FSA GOVDELIVERY

The USDA Farm Service Agency offices have moved to a paperless news distribution system.

Producers are asked to enroll in the new GovDelivery system, which provides notices, newsletters and electronic reminders instead of a hard copy through the mail.

FSA, like many other organizations, is trying to work smarter and be more efficient. Moving to electronic notifications via email helps conserve resources and save taxpayer dollars.

Producers can now subscribe to receive free email updates by going to www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe.

MARKETING ASSISTANCE LOANS (MAL)

Short-term financing is available by obtaining low interest commodity loans for eligible harvested production. A nine-month Marketing Assistance Loan provides financing that allows producers to store production for later marketing. The crop may be stored on the farm or in the warehouse.

Loans are available for producers who share in the risk of producing the eligible commodity and maintain beneficial interest in the crop through the duration of the loan. Beneficial interest means retaining the ability to make decisions about the commodity, responsibility for loss because of damage to the commodity and title to the commodity. Once beneficial interest in a commodity is lost, it is ineligible for a loan, even if you regain beneficial interest.

FINAL AVAILABILITY DATES FOR MARKETING ASSISTANCE LOANS & LOAN DEFICIENCY PAYMENTS

- March 31-Honey, Oats, Wheat
- May 31-Corn, Grain Sorghum, Soybeans
-

FOREIGN BUYERS NOTIFICATION

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA.

All individuals who are not U.S. citizens, and have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form (FSA-153) could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

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.

HIGHLY ERODIBLE LAND AND WETLAND COMPLIANCE

Landowners and operators are reminded that in order to receive payments from USDA, compliance with Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions is required. 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 insure 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.

Landowners and operators can complete form AD-1026 Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELCS) 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 your local FSA Office or visit the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/.

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.

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.

POWER OF ATTORNEY

For those who find it difficult to visit the county office because of work schedules, distance, health, etc..., FSA has a power of attorney form available that allows producers to designate another person to conduct business at the office. If interested, contact our office or any Farm Service Agency office for more information.

BANK ACCOUNT CHANGES

Current policy mandates that FSA payments be electronically transferred into a bank account. In order for timely payments to be made, producers need to notify the FSA county office when an account has been changed or if another financial institution purchases the bank where payments are sent. Payments can be delayed if the FSA office is not aware of updates to bank accounts and routing numbers.

FSA SIGNATURE POLICY

Using the correct signature when doing business with FSA can save time and prevent a delay in program benefits. The following are FSA signature guidelines:

- Spouses may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and CCC programs in which either has an interest, unless written notification denying a spouse this authority has been provided to the county office
- Spouses shall not sign on behalf of each other as an authorized signatory for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations, or other similar entities

For additional clarification on proper signatures contact your local FSA office.

IRS 1099 CHANGES

In past years, IRS Form 1099-G was issued to show all program payments received from the Farm Service Agency, regardless of the amount. For calendar year 2012, the 1099-G reporting will change.

IRS Form 1099-G (Report of Payments to Producers) will only be issued to producers whose reportable payments total \$600 or more for the calendar year. Additionally, if the producer has at least \$600 in reportable payments received from multiple FSA offices, only one Form 1099-G will be issued. Producers subject to voluntary withholding or backup (involuntary) withholding will receive the appropriate IRS form, even if combined payments are less than \$600.

The same changes will apply to producers and vendors who normally receive IRS Form 1099-MISC from FSA.

Any producer who receives less than \$600 in combined payments should consult a tax advisor to determine if these payments must be reported on their tax return.

For more information regarding IRS reporting changes, please contact the St. Clair/Macomb County FSA office at 810-984-3865 x2.

St. Clair/Macomb County Committee

Ronald Beier - Chairperson

John Busemann - Member

Charles Lewis - Member

James Koss - Member

Gerald Opificius - Member

Loretta Domagalski - Advisor

Selected Interest Rates for January 2013

90-Day Treasury Bill .125%

Farm Operating Loans — Direct 1.250%

Farm Ownership Loans — Direct 3.125%

Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher 1.50%

Emergency Loans 2.25%

Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years) 1.125%

Sugar Storage Facility Loans 2.125%

Commodity Loans 1996-Present 1.125%

Dates to Remember

January 21 Martin Luther King Jr. Federal Holiday – Offices Closed

February 18 Washington’s Birthday – Office Closed

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9450, or call toll-free at (866) 632-9992 (English) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (English Federal-relay) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Federal-relay).