



NEWSLETTER



Hancock County FSA Office

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45840

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Office Hours
Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

April 2011

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Visit our Website at:
www.fsa.usda.gov/oh

CRP Sign-up Ends April 15

Farmers and landowners have until April 15 to enroll eligible land into the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) during the general sign-up period, which opened last month.

Contracts awarded under this sign-up are scheduled to become effective Oct. 1, 2011. Additionally, current CRP participants with contracts expiring this fall may make new contract offers.

FSA will evaluate and rank eligible CRP offers using an Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) that shows the wildlife, water, soil, and air quality benefits of enrolling the land in CRP. Decisions on the EBI cutoff will be made after the sign-up ends and after analyzing the EBI data of all the offers.

In addition to the general sign-up, CRP's continuous sign-up program will be ongoing. Continuous acres represent the most environmentally desirable and sensitive land. More information can be found online at: www.fsa.usda.gov/crp.

Asparagus Sign-up Deadline

Domestic asparagus producers may apply through April 8, 2011 for compensation due to marketing losses resulting from imports during the 2004 through 2007 crop years.

The Asparagus Revenue Market Loss Assistance Payment Program (ALAP) provides a one-time payment to eligible asparagus producers. Maximum per pound payment rates are \$1.06 per pound for fresh market asparagus and \$1.08 per pound for asparagus marketed for processing. Payments to asparagus producers will be calculated for each asparagus farm operation based on their 2003 marketed production quantities. A producer that did not harvest asparagus in 2007 does not meet that eligibility requirement.

For more information on the ALAP Program, contact the nearest Farm Service Agency county office or go online to <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

Appeal Process

After an FSA official makes an adverse decision on your application/contract for USDA benefits, you will be sent a letter informing you of the decision and options you can pursue if you disagree.

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.

USDA Continues Process to Resolve Discrimination Claims of Hispanic and Women Farmers

As part of continued efforts to close the chapter on allegations that discrimination occurred at USDA in past decades, USDA established a process to resolve the claims of Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who assert that they were discriminated against when seeking USDA farm loans.

The claims process offers a streamlined alternative to litigation and provides at least \$1.33 billion in compensation, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief, to eligible Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers. Individuals interested in participating in the claims process may register to receive a claims package, or may obtain more information, by visiting www.farmerclaims.gov.

Individuals can register to receive a claims package by calling the Farmer and Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429. USDA cannot provide legal advice to potential claimants. Persons seeking legal advice may contact a lawyer or other legal services provider.

2009 SURE Sign-up Continues

The sign-up period for the 2009 crop year Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) program continues **until July 29, 2011**. SURE provides benefits for 2008 - 2011 crop year farm revenue losses due to natural disasters. USDA encourages producers who suffered losses during the 2009 crop year to visit their local FSA office to learn more about the SURE program.



To be eligible for SURE a farm must have:

- At least a 10 percent production loss on a crop of economic significance;
- A policy or plan of insurance under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for all economically significant crops;

Been physically located in a county that was declared a primary disaster county or contiguous county by the Agriculture Secretary under a Secretarial Disaster Designation. Without a Secretarial Disaster Designation, individual producers may be eligible if the actual production on the farm is less than 50 percent of the normal production on the farm due to a natural disaster. Producers considered socially disadvantaged, a beginning farmer or rancher, or a limited resource farmer may be eligible for SURE without a policy or plan of insurance or NAP coverage.

For more information on the 2009 SURE program, visit the Hancock County FSA office or the website at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/sure>.

Conservation Loan Program

The Conservation Loan (CL) program provides farmers with the funding necessary to implement conservation measures on their land. The available limit for a direct CL is \$300,000, and the limit for a guaranteed CL is \$1,119,000.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will work with applicants to develop a conservation plan containing approved conservation practices, such as water conservation structures, forest cover, permanent pastures, manure digesters and other installations.

For more information on a potential Conservation Loan, call the local FSA office and make an appointment with a loan officer.

Report Failed Crop Acreage Prior to Destruction

With spring planting here, the Hancock County Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages farmers to report failed crop acreage that will not be brought to harvest to their FSA office. Failed acreage must be reported to FSA before destroying and replanting to allow time for a field check.

"It is very important that farmers report failed acreage that will not be brought to harvest to the FSA office prior to destruction," said Hancock County Executive Director, Steve Inbody. "This simple act of insuring that failed acres are documented could be the determining factor in whether or not a farmer is eligible for future crop disaster program payments."

Form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, is used to report failed acreage and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. For crop losses covered by the Non-insured Assistance Program (NAP), producers must contact their local FSA office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent. Producers with crop insurance should also contact their local agent when losses occur and before destroying the crop.

Producers are encouraged to keep good production records on acreage with a low crop yield to document crop losses. To be eligible for crop disaster programs in the future, production records may help support crop loss claims.

Additional information in regard to failed crop acreage or crop losses covered by the Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP) can be obtained by contacting your local FSA office. FSA program information is also available online at: <http://www.fsa/usda/gov>.

Selected Interest Rates for April 2011	
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	2.750%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	5.000%
Farm Ownership Loans — Down Payment	1.500%
Emergency Loans	3.750%
Conservation Loans	5.000%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 7 year	2.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 10 year	3.375%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 12 year	3.625%
Sugar Storage Facility Loans	4.000%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.250%

DCP Sign-up Continues

Enrollment for the 2011 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) continues through **June 1, 2011**. USDA encourages producers to make use of the eDCP automated website to sign-up, or producers can visit any USDA Service Center to complete their 2011 DCP contract. USDA may accept any late-filed applications received through September 30, of the program year.

The electronic DCP (or eDCP) service saves producers time, reduces paperwork and speeds up contract processing at USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices. It is available to all producers who are eligible to participate in the DCP Program and can be accessed at: www.fsa.usda.gov/dcp and then click on the "Access eDCP Services" link, under the "I Want to Section". To access the service, producers must have an active USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account, which requires filling out an online registration form at: <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov> and then click on the "Create an Account Page" link, and lastly followed by a visit to the local FSA Service Center for identity verification.

For more information on the 2011 DCP program, visit the Hancock County FSA office or the website at: www.fsa.usda.gov/dcp.

NAP Production Reporting

Production records for individual crops need to be filed with our local FSA office to establish an approved NAP yield. If this is the first year you participated in NAP, you can provide production and acreage information from prior years to establish your yield. If you participated in NAP in previous years, you must report your production and acreage on a yearly basis to keep your yield up-to-date. Records submitted must be reliable or verifiable. Records need to show crop disposition. We recommend producers submit 2011 production records as soon as harvest is complete. **All production records must be submitted by the subsequent crop year's final acreage reporting date.**

Final Loan and LDP Availability Date

Producers are reminded that the final commodity loan and LDP availability date for 2010 Crop Year Corn, Dry Peas, Grain Sorghum, Lentils, Mustard Seed, Safflower Seed, Small Chickpeas, Soybeans and Sunflower seed **will be May 31, 2011**.

Controlled Substance

Any person who is 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.

Farm Record Changes

June 1, 2011 is the deadline to provide changes to your farm records at the local FSA office for the 2011 crop year. If you are changing your operation entity type, adding or dropping cropland or farms, or adding entities to your operation, contact the FSA county office by June 1.

Adjusted Gross Income

USDA has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Internal Revenue Service to establish an electronic information exchange process for verifying compliance with the adjusted gross income (AGI) provisions for farm programs. Written consent will be required from each producer or payment recipient for the tax review process. No actual tax data will be included in the report that IRS sends to FSA.

The agreement ensures that payments are not issued to producers whose AGI exceeds certain limits. The limits set in the 2008 Farm Bill are \$500,000 nonfarm average AGI for commodity and disaster programs; \$750,000 farm average AGI for direct payments; and \$1 million nonfarm average AGI for conservation programs.

Participants in CCC programs subject to average AGI rules must submit form CCC-927 (Individual) and/or CCC-928 (Legal Entity) to the Internal Revenue Service by June 15 to avoid interruption of program benefits.

These forms may be obtained from local FSA and NRCS offices or online at: Participants can also visit the Ohio FSA State website and download the forms at: www.fsa.usda.gov/oh under the "I Want To" section. The AGI factsheet is available at: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/irsmou10.pdf.

Rural Energy for America Program (REAP)

Rural Development is currently accepting applications for the Fiscal Year 2011 Rural Energy for America Program. This program is designed to provide grants and loan guarantees to farmers and rural small for-profit businesses who wish to install energy efficiency improvements or to install renewable energy systems. Renewable energy systems can include solar electric, solar thermal, wind, geothermal, biomass and anaerobic digestion systems. Energy efficiency improvement systems can include lighting improvements, insulation, electric motor replacements and other energy efficiency improvement projects as outlined in the energy audit.

A new type of renewable energy system has been added to the listing of eligible projects this year. The installation of blender pumps at retail gasoline stations and convenience stores will be considered an eligible project. This new project type was added in an effort to further promote the use of ethanol in the rural areas of the country.

For Fiscal Year 2011, additional emphasis is being placed on projects which are requesting less than \$20,000. Congress has authorized a specific budget allocation to fund these smaller projects which provide energy efficiencies or can produce renewable energy for the applicant. If you are considering a small project with a grant request of less than \$20,000, now would be the time to apply.

Grain dryer replacement projects which have been a major beneficiary of the program in previous years, are receiving less emphasis in Fiscal Year 2011. Since only dryers of similar size can be funded through this program, an application with a proposed increase in dryer capacity may result in a reduction in the grant request and award. These reviews will be completed once an application for grant and/or loan guarantee assistance is received.

If you are interested in pursuing a grant or loan guarantee for the Rural Energy for America Program, please submit an application to the address listed below at your earliest opportunity. Grant requests received early in the fiscal year have generally fared better than other applications.

Randy Monhemius, Business Program Specialist
Randy.Monhemius@oh.usda.gov
 USDA, Rural Development
 200 North High Street, Room 507
 Columbus, OH 43215
 Phone 614-255-2424

Dates to Remember	
April 8	Deadline to apply for ALAP benefits.
April 15	CRP General Sign-up Ends.
May 30	Memorial Day Holiday. FSA Offices Closed.
May 31	Deadline to apply for 2010 commodity loans and LDP's on feed grains, soybeans, pulse crops.
June 1	Deadline to sign-up for 2011 ACRE and Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment Program. USDA may accept late-filed applications.
June 15	County Committee Nomination period begins.
June 15	Deadline to submit the CCC-927 and CCC-928 consent forms to the IRS.

Visit our website at: www.fsa.usda.gov/oh

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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 20250-9410, 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). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."