



NEWSLETTER



Hancock County FSA Office

7868 County Rd 140
Findlay, Ohio 45840

419-422-5438 phone
419-422-5105 fax

Hours

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

January 2013

County Office Staff
Jim Greve,
County Executive
Director

Holly Gates,
Farm Loan Manager

Casey Gunder,
Diane Parke,
Sue Stahl,
Janis Wittenmyer,
Ann Reamsnyder,
Program Technicians

COC Members
Richard Cupples,
Karen Conine,
Mike Comley,

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

Office Closed
January 21, 2013
Federal Holiday

County Committee Election Results

Congratulations to Karen Conine! Karen was re-elected to represent farmers from Allen, Biglick, Cass, Marion, Portage and Washington on the county committee. Karen was elected to her 2nd consecutive term. The election results for Local Administrative Area 2 are:

Karen Conine — Elected to the county committee (COC)

Richard Colman — 1st alternate to COC,

The committee members held their organizational meeting on January 9th to determine who will serve as the county committee Chairman and Vice-Chairman. Richard Cupples will serve as Chairman and Mike Conley will serve as Vice Chairman for 2013. The Committee also established the second Wednesday of the month to hold the COC meetings. The meetings will start at 8:30 am and will be held in the Hancock County FSA office Located at 7868 County Road 140, Suite C, Findlay, Ohio 44840.

Changes to IRS Forms 1099-G and 1099-Misc for Calendar Year 2012

In past years, IRS Forms 1099-G were issued to show all program payments received from the Farm Service Agency, regardless of the amount. For calendar year 2012, the 1099-G reporting has changed.

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 Hancock County FSA office at 419-422-5438.

LDPs for Wool and Unshorn Lamb Pelts

Eligible producers have until Jan. 31, 2013, to apply for Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP) for wool and unshorn pelts produced during the 2012 crop year.

Eligible producers must have beneficial interest in the wool and pelts, owned the lamb for at least 30 calendar days before the date of slaughter and sell the unshorn lamb for immediate slaughter. Producers must also comply with wetland conservation and highly erodible land conservation provisions on all lands they operate or have interest in.

To qualify for payment, pelts must have been produced by an eligible producer from live unshorn lambs of domestic origin in the United States.

Faxed Signatures

Certain faxed signatures shall be accepted for all applicable program forms or other documents approved for faxed signatures, if all other signature requirements are met.

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:



- A married woman shall sign her given name: Mrs. Mary Doe, not Mrs. John Doe
- For a minor, FSA requires the minor's signature and one from an eligible parent
- Note, by signing the applicable document, the parent is liable for actions of the minor and may be liable for refunds, liquidated damages, etc
- When signing on one's behalf the signature must agree with the name typed or printed on the form, or be a variation that does not cause the name and signature to be in disagreement. Example - John W. Smith is on the form. The signature may be John W. Smith or J.W. Smith or J. Smith. Or Mary J. Smith may be signed as Mrs. Mary Joe Smith, M.J. Smith, Mary Smith, etc
- FAXED signatures will be accepted for certain forms and other documents provided the acceptable program forms are approved for FAXED signatures. Producers are responsible for the successful transmission and receipt of FAXED information.

Examples of documents **not** approved for FAXED signatures include:

- Promissory note
- Assignment of payment
- Joint payment authorization
- Acknowledgement of commodity certificate purchase
- Power of Attorney
- FSA Committee Election Ballots
- 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
- All members of a general partnership must sign for the general partnership unless an individual is authorized to act on the behalf of the general partnership and bind all members
 - Spouses may sign on behalf of each other's individual interest in a partnership, unless notification denying a spouse that authority is provided to the

county office

- Acceptable signatures for general partnerships, joint ventures, corporations, estates, and trusts shall consist of an indicator "by" or "for" the individual's name, individual's name and capacity, or individual's name, capacity, and name of entity

For additional clarification on proper signatures contact The Hancock County FSA office.

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 with 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.

Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation 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 are reminded to comply with tillage, crop residue, and rotation requirements specified in their conservation plan. Farmers are to notify the USDA Farm Service Agency prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to insure compliance. Failure to obtain advance approval for any of these activities can result in the loss of eligibility for certain USDA program benefits.

Selected Interest Rates for January 2013	
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	1.250%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	3.125%
Limited Resource Loans	5.000%
Farm Ownership Loans — Down Payment	1.500%
Emergency Loans	2.250%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 7 year	1.125%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 10 year	1.625%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 12 year	1.875%
Sugar Storage Facility Loans	2.125%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.125%

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 verified according to agency specifications. *NAP losses must be reported within 15 days of loss.*

FSA Reminds Producers That All Counties in Ohio Were Designated as Primary or Contiguous Natural Disaster Areas

The Hancock County Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers about the U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretarial designation on Sept. 5, 2012. All of Ohio's counties were designated as primary or contiguous agricultural natural disaster areas due to drought and excessive heat that occurred from February 1, 2012 and continuing.

This gives all qualified farm operators in the designated areas the opportunity to file an application for low interest emergency (EM) loans from USDA's FSA, provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability.

USDA FSA has a variety of programs, in addition to the emergency loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity. Other programs available to assist farmers include the Emergency Conservation Program and the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program.

Interested farmers may contact the Hancock county FSA office for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs.

Applications for FSA Loans

Farmers that intend to apply to the Farm Service Agency for loan assistance for the upcoming crop year are encouraged to file their applications as early as possible. Filing early will help ensure that your loan is processed and approved as early as possible so that planting decisions can be made. Not applying early can result in a

delay in processing loans due to the volume of applications that must be processed in date order. Contact the Hancock County FSA Loan Approval Official for more details and assistance in applying.

Financial Inquiries for FSA Producers

January signals the beginning of a new year, and a time to gather financial records and start thinking about filling out a 1040. Producers who have signed up for a USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account will be able to access their farm data through Financial Inquires for FSA Producers. The site is available under Online Services on the Ohio FSA webpage at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/oh>.

If you need to inquire about a particular electronic deposit, program payment, debt, or 1099G – USDA Level 2 customers can go here to view financial information.

Help Grow Your Farm Future -- 2012 Ag Census Survey Begins!

America's farmers and producers have the opportunity to make a positive impact on their communities by taking part in the Census of Agriculture. Conducted every five years by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the Census captures a complete count of all U.S. farms, ranches and those who operate them.

Census data is used by all those who serve farmers and rural communities from federal, state and local governments to agribusinesses and trade associations. Companies and cooperatives can use the information to determine the locations of facilities that will serve agricultural producers. Often legislators use the information when shaping farm policies and programs.

As preparations continue for this year's Census of Agriculture, we call on farmers and ranchers to share their stories, ask questions and talk to their fellow producers about this critical effort. Your answers to the Census help grow your farm future; shape farm programs; and boost services for you, your community and your industry.

NASS will mail out Census forms in late December, and responses are due by **February 4th, 2013**. Producers also have the option to complete their forms online. After all, the Census is your voice, your future and your responsibility. For more information about the Census, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov or call 1-888-4AG-STAT (1-888-424-7828).

For more information, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov. The Census of Agriculture is your voice, your future, your responsibility.

Hispanic and Women Farmer and Rancher Claims Period

Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA in past decades can continue to file claims until March 25, 2013.

The process offers a voluntary alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or female farmer and rancher who can prove that USDA denied their applications for loan or loan servicing assistance for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000.

As announced in February 2011, the voluntary claims process will make available at least \$1.33 billion for cash awards and tax relief payments, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief, to eligible Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers. There are no filing fees to participate in the program.

Call center representatives can be reached at 1-888-508-4429. Claimants must register for a claims package (by calling the number or visiting the website) and the claims package will be mailed to claimants. All those interested in learning more or receiving information about the claims process and claims packages are encouraged to attend meetings in your communities about the claims process and contact the website or claims telephone number.

- **Website:** www.farmerclaims.gov; **Phone:** 1-888-508-4429
- **Claims Period:** Sept. 24, 2012 - March 25, 2013.

Independent legal services companies will administer the claims process and adjudicate the claims. Although there are no filing fees to participate and a lawyer is not required to participate in the claims process, persons seeking legal advice may contact a lawyer or other legal services provider.

Appeal Process

After an FSA official makes a decision on your request for USDA services or application, 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.

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 in person or by phone.

Dates to Remember

Jan. 1	Elected Committee Members and alternates take office.
Jan. 1	New Year's Day Holiday. FSA Offices Closed.
Jan. 21	Martin Luther King Jr. Day Holiday. FSA Offices Closed.
Jan. 31	Deadline on 2012 LDPs for wool and unshorn lamb pelts.
Feb. 18	President's Day Holiday. FSA Offices Closed.
Mar. 15	Deadline to obtain 2013 NAP coverage on spring planted crops.
April 1	Final Availability for 2012 crop wheat, barley, oats, honey loans and LDPs.
Continues	Farm Storage Facility Loan Program.

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.

Reasonable Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment to attend or participate in meetings or events sponsored by the Farm Service Agency. If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in one of our events, please call the FSA county office and we will be happy to make any needed arrangements.

Farmers can visit the Hancock County FSA office and register **for free email updates** or go online to www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe and follow the online options. Participants will be asked to provide their email addresses and cell phone numbers.

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

"The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all of its programs 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, political beliefs, genetic information, 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, 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."