Hancock County FSA Office

7868 CR 140, Suite C
Findlay, Oh, 45840

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

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

December 2013

County Office Staff
Jim Greve,
County Executive Director

Holly Gates,
Farm Loan Manager

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

Next County Committee Meeting:
January, 22, 2013 at 8:30 AM.

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

New County Committee Election Ballots to be Mailed

The County Committee Election ballots that were mailed to producers on Nov. 4 were incorrectly printed with the producer's name and address on the back of the ballot. County committee elections must use a secret ballot so the misprinted ballots cannot be used. Please destroy or recycle the misprinted ballot. If you have already voted, your ballot will be destroyed unopened.

New ballots will be mailed to producers on December 20, 2013. These ballots will indicate that they are the corrected ballot in several places, including on the outside of the mailing, on the ballot and on the outside of the return envelope.

The corrected ballot must be returned to the Hancock County FSA Office or postmarked by January 17, 2014. All newly elected county committee members will take office February 18, 2014. All county committee members whose term expires on Dec. 31, 2013, will have their term extended to January 31, 2014.

County committee members are an important component of the operations of FSA and provide a link between the agricultural community and USDA. Farmers and ranchers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity price support programs; conservation programs; incentive indemnity and disaster programs for some commodities; emergency programs and eligibility. FSA committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm may also be eligible to vote.

The candidates in this year's election are:

Steven Cramer is nominated in LAA 3, Hancock County, to serve as a committee member. Cramer resides at 10056 TR 10, Findlay, Ohio and has produced corn, soybeans and wheat for 42 years.

Steven Schoonover also nominated in LAA 3, Hancock County, to serve as a committee member. Schoonover resides at 6480 CR 84, Findlay, Ohio and has produced corn, soybeans and wheat for 42 years.

Don Allen Dukes also nominated in LAA 3, Hancock County, to serve as a committee member. Dukes resides at 16015 CR 16, Bluffton, Ohio and has produced corn, and soybeans for 40 years.

More information on county committees, such as the new 2013 fact sheet and brochures, can be found on the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections or at the Hancock County FSA office.

Guaranteed Loan Limit

The Farm Service Agency has announced that the loan limit for the Guaranteed Loan Program is currently $1,355,000. The limit is adjusted annually based on data compiled by the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

The lending limit increases every year according to an inflation index. The maximum combined guaranteed and direct farm loan indebtedness has increased to $1,655,000.

As a reminder, the one-time loan origination fee charged on FSA guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans is 1.5 percent of the guaranteed portion of the loan.

Producers should contact the Hancock FSA county office with questions about farm loans.

2014 Acreage Reporting Dates

2014 crops with a final reporting date between October 1, 2013 and December 31, 2013 will not be assessed late filing fees at FSA. Crops under this waiver include fall wheat, fall barley, native and improved grasses intended for grazing or haying. The Risk Management Agency (RMA) did not grant a waiver so producers need to consult their crop insurance agent for deadlines for insured crops.

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit the Hancock County FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for Hancock County:

Dec. 16, 2013 --- Fall Barley, Fall Wheat, and all other Fall-Seeded Small Grains.
Jan. 2, 2014 ----- Report honey and Maple sap.
Jan.15, 2014 ---- Apples, Grapes.
May 31, 2014 --- Report Nursery Crop Acreage.
July 15, 2014 --- Report all your Burley Tobacco, Cabbage (Planted 3/19/14-5/31/14), Corn, Grain Sorghum, Hybrid Corn Seed, Spring Oats, Popcorn, Potatoes, Soybeans, Sugar Beets, Tomatoes, Alfalfa and all other crops.
Aug. 15, 2014 --- Report Cabbage (Planted 6/1/14-7/20/14).
Sept. 30, 2014 --- Report Aquaculture.
Dec. 15, 2014 --- Fall Barley, Fall Wheat, and all other Fall-Seeded Small Grains.

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.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact the Hancock County FSA office at Phone.

FSA Advises Producers to Anticipate Payment Reductions Due to Mandated Sequester

USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) is reminding farmers and ranchers who participate in FSA programs to plan accordingly in FY2014 for automatic spending reductions known as sequestration. The Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA) mandates that federal agencies implement automatic, annual reductions to discretionary and mandatory spending limits. For mandatory programs, the sequestration rate for FY2014 is 7.2%. Accordingly, FSA is implementing varying sequestration rates for the following programs:

- Dairy Indemnity Payment Program;
- Marketing Assistance Loans;
- Loan Deficiency Payments;
- Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program;
- Tobacco Transition Payment Program;
- 2013 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payments;
- 2013 Average Crop Revenue Election Program;
- 2011 and 2012 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program;

Conservation Reserve Program payments are specifically exempt by statute from sequestration, thus these payments will not be reduced.

These sequester percentages reflect current law estimates; however with the continuing budget uncertainty, Congress still may adjust the exact percentage reduction. Today’s announcement intends to help producers plan for the impact of sequestration cuts in FY2014.

At this time, FSA is required to implement the sequester reductions. Due to the expiration of the Farm Bill on September 30, FSA does not have the flexibility to cover these payment reductions in the same manner as in FY13. FSA will provide notification as early as practicable on the specific payment reductions.

For information about FSA programs, visit the Hancock County USDA Service Center or go to www.fsa.usda.gov/.

Maintaining the Quality of Loaned Grain

Bins are ideally designed to hold a level volume of grain. When bins are overfilled and grain is heaped up, airflow is hindered and the chance of spoilage increases.

Producers who take out marketing assistance loans and use the farm-stored grain as collateral should remember that they are responsible for maintaining the quality of the grain through the term of the loan.

Farm Loan Year End Reviews

Producers that have a farm loan with FSA are reminded they must provide data for their Year-End Analysis (YEA) to their loan officer each year. Borrowers are urged to provide this information timely so that their files can be maintained. The office will contact you for the data you will need to provide us.

Operating Loan Applications Needed Now

Farmers that plan to apply to the Farm Service Agency for annual operating loan assistance this year are encouraged to apply as soon as possible. The earlier an application for loan assistance is filed, the quicker the FSA staff can process your request. In addition, due to budget constraints, farmers that wait until later in the year to apply, often run the risk of finding out that our funding allocations have been utilized already. Decisions on loans cannot be made until a complete application is received.

Farmers should also contact the Hancock County FSA office to setup an appointment with a Farm Loan Official for information as to what is required in order to have a complete loan application on file.

Changes to IRS Forms 1099-G and 1099-Misc for Calendar Year 2013

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

Selected Interest Rates for December 2013	
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%
Farm Operating Loans -- Direct	1.875%
Farm Ownership Loans -- Direct	4.125%
Limited Resource Loans	5.000%
Farm Ownership Loans -- Down Payment	1.500%
Emergency Loans	2.875%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 7 year	2.000%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 10 year	2.625%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 12 year	2.875%
Sugar Storage Facility Loans	3.125%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.125%

FSA Announces the Resumption of 2013 Crop Commodity Loan Disbursements

The Farm Service Agency has resumed processing and disbursement of 2013 crop commodity loans. Crop year 2013 commodity loan-making was suspended Oct. 1, 2013, to make changes necessary to accommodate the automatic funding reductions known as sequester.

The commodity loan programs provide interim financing to producers for agricultural commodities stored after harvest and then sold throughout the year. Producers requesting 2013 crop commodity loans on their harvested commodities now will have a 5.1 percent reduction to the loan amount upon its disbursement, due to the sequestration. Commodity loans issued by marketing associations and loan servicing agents are also subject to the sequestration reduction.

During the period that loan-making was suspended, producers were still able to submit loan applications to their county FSA offices, marketing associations and loan servicing agents. The processing and disbursement of these applications will begin immediately.

For further information about commodity marketing loans, farmers may contact the Hancock County FSA office or go online to www.fsa.usda.gov.

Unauthorized Disposition of Grain

If loan grain has been disposed of through feeding, selling or any other form of disposal without prior written authorization from the county office staff, it is considered unauthorized disposition. The financial penalties for unauthorized dispositions are severe and a producer's name will be placed on a loan violation list for a two-year period. Always call before you haul any grain under loan.

Maintaining CRP Practice Covers

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) is committed to partnering with landowners and producers to create the most beneficial conservation practices in Ohio. Properly established and maintained CRP practice cover not only promotes wildlife, it helps prevent erosion and enhances water quality.

CRP participants follow a set of standards to establish and manage their conservation cover throughout the length of the 10-15 year contract. Properly maintaining CRP practice covers will allow landowners to survey their CRP practice cover and be aware of any potential problems. These requirements go beyond planting the practice acres and walking away; or mowing the cover every year for cosmetic purposes.

CRP participants must follow the terms and conditions of the CRP-1 contract and support documents, including the Conservation Plan of Operations (CPO). The CPO is a record of the participant's decisions and contains all practices necessary for the successful establishment, maintenance, and management of the vegetative cover on all acres enrolled in CRP. Participants should refer to their completed conservation plan and NRCS Job Sheets provided during the development of the conservation plan for guidance and contact the Blank County FSA office for further information or questions.

CRP participants are reminded to schedule maintenance and management activities on CRP acres outside of the primary nesting season. Cost-share documents along with detailed bills are to be submitted to the FSA office after the activity has been completed. Mid-contract management activities are required and failure to perform them on a timely basis will result in a determination of noncompliance. Landowners and farmers who need more information should contact the Hancock County FSA office.

LDPs for Unshorn Lamb Pelts

Eligible producers have until Jan. 31, 2014, to apply for Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP) for unshorn lamb pelts produced during the 2013 crop year.

Eligible producers must have beneficial interest in the 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.

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

Dates to Remember	
Dec. 16	**Deadline** to report the 2013 Fall Seeded Crops for fall barley, fall wheat and all other fall-seeded small grains.
Dec. 20	Corrected County committee ballots mailed to voters.
Dec. 25	Christmas Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**
Jan. 1	New Year's Day Holiday. F**SA Offices Closed.**
Jan. 15	**Deadline extended** to report the 2013 Fall Seeded Crops for fall barley, fall wheat and all other fall-seeded small grains without paying a late-file fee.
Jan. 17	**Last day** to return the corrected ballots in county committee election.
Jan. 20	Martin Luther King Jr. Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**
Jan. 31	**Deadline** on 2013 LDPs for wool and unshorn lamb pelts.
Feb. 17	President's Day Holiday. **FSA Offices Closed.**
Feb. 18	Elected Committee Members and alternates take office.

Spousal Signatures

Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office staff by either spouse.

There are exceptions to the rule, where spouses may not sign on behalf of each other for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities.

Individual signatures are also required on certain Farm Loan Program and Farm Storage Facility Loan documents.

For more clarification on spousal signature authority, feel free to contact the FSA office.

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To file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at **http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html**, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax at (202) 690-7442 or e-mail at **program.intake@usda.gov**. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."