

## SURE

The 2008 Farm Bill amended the Trade Act of 1974 to create the Supplemental Revenue assistance program (SURE). The SURE program provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disaster that incurred in the crop years 2008 through September 30, 2011.

To be eligible for SURE payments, a producer is required to obtain crop insurance on all crops in all counties or, if crop insurance is not available, to participate in the Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP) except for grazed acreage. However, crop insurance or NAP coverage is no longer required for crops that are not of economic significance or those where the administrative fee required to buy NAP coverage exceeds 10 percent of the value of the coverage.

Eligible farmers and ranchers who meet the definition of Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, or Beginning Farmer or Rancher are exempt from the risk management purchase requirement.

To trigger a SURE payment, participants must have at least one crop of economic significance suffer a 10% production loss due by comparing the actual production on the SURE farm to that crop, and have either of the following:

- a portion of the SURE farm located in a natural disaster county designated by the Secretary, including contiguous counties; or
- an overall loss greater than 50 percent of the actual production on the farm compared to expected revenue for the farm for that crop year.

For more information about the SURE program, please visit your local FSA office.

## LDP Deadline on Unshorn Wool, Mohair and Lamb Pelts

Eligible producers have **until Feb. 1, 2010**, to apply for LDPs for wool, mohair and unshorn pelts produced during the 2009 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.

## 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.

## Dairy Economic Loss Assistance Payment (DELAP) Program

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Dairy Economic Loss Assistance Payment (DELAP) Program provides a one-time direct payment to assist dairy producers who have recently experienced low milk prices and high production costs. The 2010 Agricultural Appropriations Bill authorized \$290 million for loss assistance payments to eligible dairy producers.

Eligible producers will receive a payment based on the amount of milk both produced and commercially marketed by their operation during the months of February through July 2009. Production information from these months will be used to estimate a full year's production for an operation to calculate the payments, using a 6-million pound per dairy operation limit.

Dairy producers who have production records at their local FSA office because they participated in another FSA dairy program **do not need to apply** for the program. FSA will use existing production records for February through July 2009 to calculate and issue their payments. The expected payment rate is approximately \$0.32 per cwt.

Producers who have not provided production data for those months to FSA, and have not already been contacted by FSA to provide such data, have 30 days, **until Jan. 19, 2010, to apply.**

To be eligible for DELAP, the dairy producer and the dairy operation in which the producer has a share:

- Must have produced milk in the United States and marketed milk commercially at any time from February through July 2009;

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- Must have milk production data for those months;
- Must certify to all milk production produced and marketed by the dairy operation during that time.

Also, any dairy producer who has an annual average adjusted gross nonfarm income of more than \$500,000 for calendar years 2006 through 2008 is not eligible for DELAP.

For more information and eligibility requirements on the new DELAP program, please visit your local FSA county office.

## USDA Rural Development Finances Grain Dryer Upgrades

In 2009, Ohio farming operations shared \$510,965 in grants from Rural Development's Rural Energy for America Program to assist in the replacement of outdated and inefficient grain dryer facilities. Loan guarantees were also used to improve the planned financing of these high efficiency grain dryers. The farmers receiving the grants and loan guarantees were able to improve the profitability of their farms through these grain dryer improvements. Farmers and small rural businesses can also use the program's energy efficiency option to fund installation of more efficient lighting, heating/cooling applications, refrigeration, gas boilers and electric motors. Renewable energy projects including wind turbines, anaerobic digestion, biomass fire boilers and solar projects can also be funded through this program.

If you are a farmer or small business owner in a rural area and have questions about installing a renewable energy system or incorporating energy efficiency improvements in your operations please contact Randy Monhemius at 614-255-2424 or email at [randy.monhemius@oh.usda.gov](mailto:randy.monhemius@oh.usda.gov).

## 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.

Foreign persons who 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 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.

## 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.

## Bank Account Changes

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

## Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

With changes to the Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program, this will allow producers of eligible commodities to obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities.

The maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL is \$500,000. Participants are 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. 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, not to exceed \$250,000.

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 in Ohio are eligible for FSFL:

- Corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, oats, 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; and
- Fruits (including nuts) and vegetables - cold storage facilities

For more information about the FSFL program, contact your local FSA office or visit the FSA Price Support website at: [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

Selected Interest Rates for January 2010	
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	2.875%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	4.750%
Farm Ownership Loans — Down Payment	1.500%
Emergency Loans	3.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 7 year	2.875%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 10 year	3.375%
Farm Storage Facility Loan -- 12 year	3.750%
Sugar Storage Facility Loans	4.000%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.375%

## November MILC Payments for Dairy Producers

Producers participating in USDA's Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) program will receive payments for the month of November. USDA makes MILC payments on a monthly basis when the Boston Class I milk price falls below \$16.94 per hundredweight as adjusted for feed costs.

The MILC payment trigger price of \$16.94 is adjusted upward when the National Average Dairy Feed Ration Cost for a month is greater than \$7.35 per cwt. USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service recently released the data for determining the Average Dairy Feed Ration Cost for the month of November on December 30, 2009. Using this information, the MILC payment trigger for the month of November has been adjusted to \$16.94, for a final MILC payment rate of \$0.3735000.

For more information about the MILC program, please visit your local FSA office or go online to: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA>.

## Power of Attorney

FSA has a required power of attorney form available for those who find it difficult to visit the county office personally because of work schedules, distance, health, etc., that enables the participant to designate another person to conduct his or her business at the office. This can be done by completing an FSA-211, Power of Attorney. The form is available at your local USDA Service Center or online at:

[http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/efcommon/eFileServices/Forms/FS A0211-0211A\\_081217V02.pdf](http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/efcommon/eFileServices/Forms/FS A0211-0211A_081217V02.pdf).

## 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.

## 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 your local FSA Loan Approval Official for more details and assistance in applying.

## County Committee Minority Advisors

FSA County Committee (COC) Advisors are a valued voice for under-represented groups and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. County committee members and their county executive directors, actively reach out to producer groups who are under-represented on county committees.

Eligibility requirements for COC Advisor nominee include:

- be actively participating in farming or ranching in the county or area;
- be willing and available to serve as an advisor, if appointed; and
- indicate in writing their willingness to serve.

Duties and Responsibilities of COC Advisors include:

- attend each COC meeting, including executive sessions;
- participate in all deliberations;
- increase awareness of and participation in FSA activities, including elections, by eligible voters to ensure that socially disadvantaged group problems and viewpoints are understood and considered in FSA actions;
- help to develop interest and incentives in socially disadvantaged group members for considering FSA work as a career;
- active soliciting candidates from socially disadvantaged groups for nomination during the election process; and
- able to perform special duties at COC's request.
- Note: Advisors do not have authority to sign documents.

Interested individuals should submit a written letter that outlines their abilities and qualifications, as well as their willingness to serve, postmarked by Jan. 29, 2010. The County Committee will review these submissions and recommend a minority advisor to the Ohio FSA State Committee. The Ohio FSA State Committee will appoint the minority advisor, whose term will begin March 1st, 2010. County Committee advisors serve for a 12-month period not to exceed 9 consecutive years.

Interested individuals should mail their letters to their FSA County office. If you have any questions regarding this position, please contact your County Executive Director.

## 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.

## 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.

Dates to Remember	
Jan. 1	New Year's Day Holiday. <b>FSA Offices Closed.</b>
Jan. 1	Elected Committee Members and alternates take office.
Jan. 18	Martin Luther King Jr. Day Holiday. <b>FSA Offices Closed.</b>
Feb. 1	<b>Deadline</b> on 2009 LDPs for wool, mohair and unshorn lamb pelts.
Feb. 15	President's Day Holiday. <b>FSA Offices Closed.</b>
Mar. 15	Deadline to obtain 2010 NAP coverage on spring planted crops.
Mar. 31	Final Availability for 2009 crop wheat, barley, oats, honey loans and LDPs.
Continues	Farm Storage Facility Loan Program.
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve program.

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