



July/August 2008



# Washtenaw/Wayne County News

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### County Executive Director

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### Important Dates

**July 18** – Deadline sign  
Livestock Compensation  
Program Contract

**August 1** – Last day to  
request a reconstitution  
(farm record change).

**August 15** – Crop certifi-  
cation deadline.

**August 20** – Final date to  
request waiver to meet  
eligibility requirements of  
the Supplemental Agricul-  
tural Disaster Assistance  
Program.

**September 30** – Deadline  
to enroll in 2008 Direct and  
Counter Cyclical Program  
(DCP).

**Farm Changes:** Please contact this office immediately if you have dropped land or picked up additional land for the 2008 crop year. The deadline for requesting a farm reconstitution is August 1, 2008.

### **CERTIFICATION DEADLINE EXTENDED.....**

The crop certification deadline of June 30<sup>th</sup> for fall seeded crops and July 15<sup>th</sup> for spring seeded crops has been extended to August 15, 2008.

Certification of acreage remains a requirement to participate in a number of Farm Service Agency programs, including the 2008/2012 farm program.

One copy of your certification will be provided free of charge. This copy can be provided to your crop insurance agent, however if additional copies are required, a minimal fee will be charged for each copy.

### **FAILED ACREAGE PROVISIONS**

A number of weather related conditions have been reported in both counties. Excess rain, high winds, drought are all qualifying disaster conditions which allow producer's to file failed acreage reports on crop(s) damaged and/or failed. It is the responsibility of each individual to timely report those losses. Provisions indicate that losses must be reported within 15 days of the disaster occurrence.

### **LIVESTOCK COMPENSATION PROGRAM SIGN UP ENDS SHORTLY**

The Livestock Compensation Program sign up ends on **July 18, 2008**. Any person interested in this program must apply by the deadline date announced. Applicants previously enrolled in livestock programs were contacted. If you were not contacted, please call your local FSA office immediately. Payments have been authorized for those individuals suffering production losses or pasture losses during qualified disaster periods.

### **2008/2012 FARM BILL PROGRAM**

**ANNOUNCED:** Sign up for the 2008 farm program began **June 25, 2008**. Please contact your local FSA Office to schedule an appointment. The deadline to enroll has been set at **September 30, 2008**. Preliminary information regarding the program are as follows:

- FAV (Fruit and Vegetable) provisions remain the same as in the previous farm programs.
- Direct Payment acres for 2008 remain the same as in the previous farm program at 85% of the base acres established. 2009 through 2011 percentages will be reduced to 83.3% with 2012 percentage returning to 85%.
- Payment yields remain the same as in the previous farm bill.
- Commodities eligible for payments remain the same as in the previous farm bill.
- Payment rates remain the same as in the previous farm bill.
- Payment limitation provisions remain the same as in the previous farm bill.
- Target prices for 2008/2009 are the same, however those prices change beginning in 2010.
- Payment eligibility and sod buster/swampbuster provisions remain in effect
- **ACRE PROGRAM**

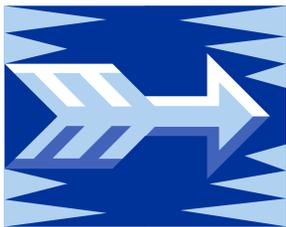
The Act authorizes ACRE program payments. In crop years 2009 through 2012, producers who make an irrevocable election to receive ACRE Program payments will:

1. not receive counter-cyclical payments on the farm.
2. be subject to a 20 percent reduction in direct payments for all covered commodities.
3. be subject to a 30 percent reduction in marketing assistance loan rates for all covered commodities.



FARM BILL  
PROVISIONS,  
CONTINUED.....

IMPORTANT  
CHANGES



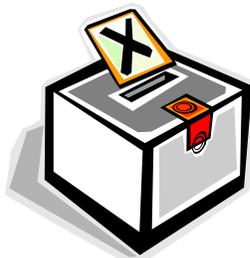
For 2008, producer's who do not meet these requirements may have this provision waived if the producer's pay a fee in an amount applicable to the noninsured crop disaster assistance program fee or catastrophic risk production plan fee by no later than .....

September 16, 2008

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING THE ACRE PROGRAM WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN FUTURE NEWSLETTERS.

- Farms where total bases acres are 10.0 acres or less cannot be enrolled into the program unless those farms are owned by a socially disadvantaged or limited resource producer
- **SURE PROGRAM**  
The SURE Program will be available to eligible producers on:
  1. Farms in disaster counties, including contiguous counties, which have incurred crop production losses and/or crop quality losses during the crop year.
  2. Any farm in the calendar year for which the total loss of production of the farm because of weather is greater than 50 percent of the normal production of the farm.

To qualify for this program, producers must have purchased crop insurance on insurable crops under the Federal Crop Insurance Act, or Purchased a noninsurable policy under the NAP (Non Insured Assistance Program) through the Farm Service Agency.



2008 County Committee  
Nominations and Election

The 2008 County Committee election will be held in the following areas:

### Washtenaw, LAA#1

Townships of: Bridgewater,  
Dexter, Freedom, Lyndon,  
Manchester, Sharon, and Sylvan

Nominating petitions were mailed to every landowner and/or operator through a statewide newsletter. Petitions are also available at your local FSA Office.

Persons interested in being nominated must complete form FSA-669A and return that form to their local FSA Office no later than August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008.

Farm Service Agency is encouraging beginning Farmers to take an active role in the County Committee election process. FSA also requires fair representation of socially disadvantaged groups on the County Committee. If those individuals are not nominated and elected to the County Committee, an advisor is recommended and appointed.

### Changing To a New Map System

We have been involved in a time consuming process for the last two years converting our maps to a Geographical Information System (GIS). This process will become our normal business process when working with maps. We are now ready to begin **Stage 2**, where we will be mailing maps to you to verify field boundaries and data is correct.

### County Office Maps - A New Look

The map you receive in the mail will be by tract. You will no longer be able to see all the land in an entire township section. The computer adjusts the size of the fields to fit the paper. In some cases the computer may make small fields so big that you can no longer verify boundaries. If you accidentally receive a distorted map, please contact us and we will print a new map. At the bottom of each map is a legend which contains data about the map: county data, farm number, tract number, etc. Due to a recent agency update, the following information has been added:

**HEL** - Highly Erodible;  
**NHEL** - Not Highly Erodible

## County Office Maps - A New Look (cont)



Wetlands were delineated through the use of maps made available by NRCS. Most tracts have delineations, but some do not. Wetlands are marked with the following symbols:

**Red Circle** - Restricted Use;  
**Yellow Triangle** - Limited Restrictions;  
**Green Square** - Exempt from Conservation Compliance Provisions.

Please contact the office for limitations of use for the various wetland labels.

### What You Must Verify!

Please review these maps to make sure your boundaries and data are correct. This includes if you have sold property, acquired new farmland, taken ground out of production for houses or buildings or no longer farm an area. At this time we want to ensure field boundaries and data are correct. Acres can **not** be disputed, but can be used as a tool to help you identify possible boundary errors. Please keep in mind there is always a potential for human error. If you notice that a land determination was not transferred (such as Wetland or HEL determination) to the new map please contact the office. We would like these maps as correct as possible to avoid violations.

### Who Will Receive Maps?

Each owner and operator who is currently attached to the tract will be mailed a map with a letter of explanation. **You are provided 30 days to address any needed corrections.** To make this process easier, most operators will receive all maps at the same time with a listing of the farms and owners to be used as a reference for the maps. Owners may receive maps separately if there is more than one operator connected to their land. This would also include situations where an individual is owner and operator on CRP but rents the remainder of the cropland to someone else.

### When Will I Receive My Maps?

Our goal is to have all maps ready for mailing as soon as possible. We anticipate maps will be printed stuffed, postmarked and in the mail on **August 1, 2008.**

## Map Data

Please keep in mind what you are seeing is a copy of the old map we have always used and has now been added to the computer.

### Stage 3: Correcting field boundaries and data.

You will need to visit the office if you determine a boundary line or the data is incorrect. We are asking that you bring the map back to the office with the proper documentation as described in the letter. We will make a copy of your map and note any boundary discrepancies. Once all owners and operators have received their maps, we will begin making map corrections.

### When Will the New Maps Become Effective?

Please keep in mind that any changes made to these maps will not become effective immediately. This project is completely separate from the maps and the farm records we are currently using for program purposes.

### Stage 4: Activation.

The acres from the new maps will be activated and used for all 2009 programs.

### Business as Usual

Map changes will **not** affect 2008 programs or crop certification. After you plant your 2008 crops you will certify your crops on the same maps and acres that you have certified on for the last 10 years.

### Program Changes

Both CRP contracts and farm bases could be affected by the updated map acres.

### Stage 5: Contract data will be adjusted to match the new farm records data.

At this point in time we have no way to determine if your farms will be affected. Please watch future newsletters for any updates on this process.

## SAFE PROGRAM (State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement)

The SAFE program is considered a continuous CRP program enrollment. A habitat block of a minimum 30 acres in size or a minimum of 200 feet in width and 10 acres in size if enrolling a field border or filter strip. This program allows grassland habitat to be established to enhance certain wildlife species.



CONTACT FSA FOR  
ADDITIONAL  
DETAILS

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## FARM LOAN PROGRAM CHANGES

The new Farm Bill has brought changes to the regulations administering the Farm Loan Programs. We have received information regarding some of the changes but not all of them. Below is a listing of the changes we have received to date:

- The limit or the amount of outstanding Direct Farm Ownership Loans has been increased to \$300,000.00.
- The limit or the amount of outstanding Direct Operating Loans has been increased to \$300,000.00.

The Direct Down Payment Loan:

1. The down payment requirement has been reduced to 5%.
2. The interest rate has been changed to the regular Farm Ownership rate minus 4% or 1.5% whichever is higher.
3. The term of the loan has been extended to 20 years.
4. The maximum loan amount has been changed to 45% of the purchase price or 45% of the appraised value or \$225,000.00 whichever is lower.



The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all 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, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's incomes derived from any public assistance programs. (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 USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

## CONDUCTING BUSINESS ELECTRONICALLY WITH USDA eGOV

eGOV provides USDA Service Center Agencies (FSA, NRCS, RD) customers the option of electronically accessing, printing, filling out and submitting forms and program applications. To fully utilize eGOV capabilities producers set up their own account for electronic signature authority at [www.eauth.egov.usda.gov](http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov). Once registered the producer visits the FSA office to activate his/her account and receive a password to conduct business electronically with USDA agencies. Current programs available through eGOV include loan deficiency payments, Direct and Counter Cyclical Program contracts, and financial inquiries that allow producers to track USDA payments and deposits.

