

December 2013



Isabella County FSA Updates

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Isabella County FSA Office

5979 E Broadway Rd
Mt Pleasant, MI 48858
Phone: 989-772-5927
Fax: 855-662-9276

County Executive Director:
Wayne Stickler

Farm Loan Manager:
Jerry Spickerman

Program Technicians:
Becky Dickman
Connie Moeggenborg
Heather Hadder
Colleen Schuldt

County Committee:
Beth Bryant - Chair
John Kampf Jr - Vice Chair
Kevin Faber - Member
Carol Neyer - Advisor

Next County Committee Meeting:
January 23, 2014 - 8:30am

MARKETING ASSISTANCE LOANS (MAL)

Short-term financing is available by obtaining low interest commodity loans for eligible harvested production. A nine-month Marketing Assistance Loan provides financing that allows producers to store production for later marketing. The crop may be stored on the farm or in the warehouse.

Loans are available for producers who share in the risk of producing the eligible commodity and maintain beneficial interest in the crop through the duration of the loan. Beneficial interest means retaining the ability to make decisions about the commodity, responsibility for loss because of damage to the commodity and title to the commodity. Once beneficial interest in a commodity is lost, it is ineligible for a loan, even if you regain beneficial interest.

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2014 ACREAGE REPORTING DATES

Producers now have until January 15, 2014, to report crops that have a November 15, 2013, or December 15, 2013, reporting deadline without paying a late-file fee. Crops under this waiver include wheat and 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 Isabella County FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for Isabella County:

January 2, 2014:	Honey (Certifying number of Colonies)
January 15, 2014: (exception only for the 2014 crop year)	Wheat, Alfalfa/Mixed Hay (new and existing), Rye, and other fall seeded crops
January 15, 2014	Apples, Blueberries, Cherries, Grapes, Peaches
February 1, 2014	Maple Sap (Number of eligible trees and taps)
July 15, 2014:	CRP, All other crops
November 15, 2014	2015 Wheat, Alfalfa/Mixed Hay (new and existing), Rye and all other fall seeded crops.

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 calendar 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.

Additionally, producers can purchase both NAP and RMA coverage for 2014 annual forage crops. NAP coverage will not be available for 2015 annual forage crops.

Late file fees will be assessed for 2014 fall seeded crops reported after January 15, 2014. Late fees will also be assessed for filing for 2014 Prevent Plant acres for fall seeded crops.

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact the Isabella County FSA office at (989) 772-5927.

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 Isabella 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:

John Kampf is a candidate nominated in LAA #3, Isabella County, to serve as a committee member, along with Kevin Clarke, LAA # 3, and Isabella County to serve as a committee member.

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 a local USDA Service Center

MICROLOAN PROGRAM

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) developed the Microloan (ML) program to better serve the unique financial operating needs of beginning, niche and small family farm operations.

FSA offers applicants a Microloan designed to help farmers with credit needs of \$35,000 or less. The loan features a streamlined application process built to fit the needs of new and smaller producers. This loan program will also be useful to specialty crop producers and operators of community supported agriculture (CSA).

Eligible applicants can apply for a maximum amount of \$35,000 to pay for initial start-up expenses such as hoop houses to extend the growing season, essential tools, irrigation and annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents, marketing, and distribution expenses. As financing needs increase, applicants can apply for a regular operating loan up to the maximum amount of \$300,000 or obtain financing from a commercial lender under FSA's Guaranteed Loan Program.

Individuals who are interested in applying for a microloan or would like to discuss other farm loan programs available should contact their local FSA office to set up an appointment with a loan official.

BEGINNING FARMER LOANS

FSA assists beginning farmers to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years

Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm

Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored FSA.

Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's median size.

Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).