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Isabella County FSA Updates

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 - Vice Chair
Kevin Faber - Member
Carol Neyer - Advisor

Next County Committee Meeting: To be determined

USDA'S FARM SERVICE AGENCY (FSA) OFFERS FARM BILL WEBSITE AND ONLINE OVERVIEW OF FARM BILL PROGRAMS

The Agricultural Act of 2014, also known as the 2014 Farm Bill, was signed by President Obama on February 7, 2014. The Act repeals certain programs, continues some programs with modifications, and authorizes several new programs administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Most of these programs are authorized and funded through 2018.

For the latest on 2014 Farm Bill programs administered by FSA, please visit our Farm Bill website at www.fsa.usda.gov/farmbill and for an FSA program overview, please read, download and/or print our recently posted FSA Farm Bill Fact Sheet titled, [What's in the 2014 Farm Bill for Farm Service Agency Customers?](#)

For more information on FSA, please contact your local USDA Service Center or visit us online at www.fsa.usda.gov.

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.

Continued...

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.

FARM STORAGE FACILITY LOAN PROGRAM

The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFLP) allows producers of eligible commodities to obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities.

The new maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL is \$500,000. Participants are now 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. Additional security is required for poured-cement open-bunker silos, renewable biomass facilities, cold storage facilities, hay barns and for all loans exceeding \$50,000. New 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 one disbursement after completion of one 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.

The following commodities are eligible for farm storage facility loans:

- Corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, 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, dry beans and dry peas
- Hay
- Renewable biomass
- Fruits (including nuts) and vegetables - cold storage facilities
- Honey

For more information about FSFL please visit your FSA county office or www.fsa.usda.gov.

CHANGES IN FARMING OPERATON

With the 2014 crop year upon us, you may already be thinking about decisions on how you will operate in 2014. Have you picked up new ground? Are you forming a new entity or changing the structure of your current farming operation? Do you have changes in farm ownership that must be reported?

If so, you should visit your local Farm Service Agency office now! These are just a few of the types of changes that must be reported to FSA each year. If you have bought or sold land, or if you have picked up or dropped rented land from your operation, make sure you report the changes to the local FSA office as soon as possible. You need to provide a copy of your deed or recorded land contract for purchased property.

Failure to maintain accurate records with FSA on all land you have an interest in can lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties. Making the record changes now will save you time in the spring. Update signature authorization when changes in the operation occur. Producers are reminded to contact their local FSA office of a change in operations on a farm so that records can be kept current and accurate.

REQUESTING MAPS

Due to budget restraints and to reduce postage expenses, we will not be mailing out copies of the farm maps. You may obtain copies when you visit the office or you may bring in a NEW and UNOPENED removable media (CD or USB drive) and we will copy our maps to the media. We can also e-mail you maps to you to be reviewed before your arrival at the County Office for certification of your acreage report. By reviewing your maps before your appointment and letting us know of any changes that need to be made we can make sure your maps are corrected and up to date when you come in to certify.

You may also use these maps for aiding in the certification process by writing the crop and planting dates on the fields and presenting the maps to us for loading the crops into our reporting system as you get the fields planted. Being proactive will be a great time saver for you.

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 by FSA
- . Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's average size.

***** PLEASE NOTE – THE ACREAGE LIMITS FOR BEGINNING FARMERS WERE CHANGED WITH THE SIGNING OF THE RECENT FARM BILL.** Beginning Farmers in Isabella County may now own up to 57.9 acres and still qualify for real estate purchases.

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

CRP COVER MAINTENANCE

The Maintenance of CRP cover is the participant's responsibility by controlling insect pests, weeds and undesirable shrubs, (example Autumn Olive). "Annual mowing is considered "Mowing for Cosmetic Purposes" and "Generic Weed Control" this is a prohibited practice.

If a maintenance activity is necessary it is to be conducted outside the primary nesting or brood rearing season for wildlife (May 1st – August 1st). A request may be made in writing to the Isabella COC requesting spot treatment of noxious weeds and/or shrubs at any time if the timing of the control measure is crucial to the effectiveness of the treatment.

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).