



Portage-Summit County News

December 2008

Portage-Summit County USDA Service Center

Portage-Summit County
FSA
6970 State Route 88
Ravenna, OH 44266
330-297-7633 (phone)
330-297-7210 (fax)
www.fsa.usda.gov/oh

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

County Committee
Jay Goodell
Bob Luther
Peter Schanz
Elden Villers
Wayne Biltz
Karen Hilgert, Advisor

County Committee meets
3rd Thursday each month

Staff
Theresa Johnson, CED
Wendy Behon, PT
Christine Wise, PT
Linda Wise, PT

Jack Barthels, FLM
Teresa Goode, FLO

Reasonable accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, please contact Theresa Johnson, County Executive Director.



Request for Pork Checkoff Referendum

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) announced that it will conduct a Request for Referendum among eligible producers and importers of hogs, pigs, pork, and pork products to determine if they want a referendum on the Pork Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Order, commonly known as the Pork Checkoff Program. Participation is voluntary, and only individuals who desire a referendum on the Pork Checkoff Program should participate.

USDA will only conduct a referendum on the order if at least 15 percent of the total number of eligible pork producers and importers request a referendum. If necessary, the referendum will be conducted within one year after the results of the Request for Referendum are announced. If results of the Request for Referendum indicate that a referendum is **not supported**, a referendum would **not be conducted**.

The Request for Referendum on the Pork Checkoff Program will be **held Dec. 8, 2008 through Jan. 2, 2009**. Producers and importers who were engaged in pork production or in the importation of hogs, pigs, pork, or pork products between Jan. 1, 2007, and Dec. 31, 2007, and were at least 18 years of age on or before Dec. 31, 2007, are eligible to participate.

For producers, the Request for Referendum will be conducted at the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices where their administrative farm records are maintained. For producers **not** participating in FSA programs, the opportunity to participate will be provided at the County FSA office where the person owns or rents land. Eligible producers may obtain form, *LS-54-1: Pork Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Request for Referendum* from those offices either in person, by mail or by facsimile. Forms may also be obtained on the AMS website at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/LSMarketingPrograms>, and click on, "Pork Request for Referendum Information" link and then click on "Form LS-54-1" link. **Note:** form *LS-54-1* will only be available on the AMS website from Dec. 8, 2008 through Jan. 2, 2009.

In order to vote, form *LS-54-1* and supporting documentation, where applicable, such as a sales re-

ceipt, veterinary bill, feed bill, copies of grower contracts, cancelled check or proof of payment **must be** returned in person, by mail, or by facsimile to the appropriate county FSA office by the close of business Jan. 2, 2009. Form *LS-54-1* and supporting documentation returned by mail **must be** postmarked no later than midnight on Jan. 2, 2009, and received by Jan. 9, 2009.

The Order is authorized by the Pork Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Act of 1985, part of the 1985 Farm Bill. The program became effective on Sept. 5, 1986, and assessments began Nov. 1, 1986. This program is designed to strengthen the position of pork and pork products in the marketplace.

Marketing Assistance Loans

Commodity Credit Corporation 9-month marketing assistance loan program is available for 2008 crop wheat, oats, soybeans and corn. To qualify for price support loans, an acreage report must be on file with FSA and producer needs to be in compliance with sod/swamp and wetland conservation rules. Commodity must have been produced by an eligible producer, harvested and stored in an acceptable structure, or be delivered to an approved warehouse. Title (beneficial interest) in the grain must remain with the producer. An interest rate is established for the month of loan disbursement and subject to adjustment on January 1. Crop loans provide immediate access to operating capital and afford the opportunity for market price appreciation after the harvest period. The farm stored quantity for loan may be certified by the producer or measured by an FSA employee for a nominal fee. All grain mortgaged by CCC is subject to spot-check at anytime. **Portage & Summit County Loan Rates per bushel are:** Corn (\$1.98), Soybeans (\$5.04P/\$5.09S), Wheat (\$2.26P/\$2.27S), and Oats (\$1.43).

Turn-Around Marketing Assistance Loan Policy

Under the 2008 Farm Bill, producers who store commingled commodities in unapproved/unlicensed warehouses are not eligible to repay Marketing Assistance Loans (MAL) using the commodity certificate exchange. Producers that deliver commodities to unapproved/unlicensed warehouses will lose beneficial interest in the commodity on the day of delivery.

Federal or State licensed warehouses, with or without a Credit Commodity Corporation (CCC) storage agreement, and CCC-approved warehouses are eligible for turn-around loans. Producers who store commodities in these facilities are eligible to repay a turn-around MAL using the

commodity exchange provision only for the 2008 and 2009 crop years. The authority to offer commodity certificate exchanges to producers will terminate at the end of the 2009 crop year and will be unavailable for subsequent crop years (2010-2012).

Change in Farming Operation or Bank Account

Producers are reminded to contact the FSA office to report any change in a farming operation so records are current and accurate. This includes, but is not limited to bank account changes, farm ownership or operator changes and changes in address. Proof of ownership will be needed for an ownership record change at FSA. Proof of being a new operator is encouraged based on the requirement that FSA can give out private information only with proper authorization.

Changes need to be reported in advance, when a different operator will be planting crops on the farm for the 2009 crop year or if land ownership has changed. FSA needs this information in advance of providing printed records to you or running contracts for program participation. Advance notice is important for the sake of revising our automated record system, which now is only updated nightly rather than immediately. In other words, you need to report changes ahead of time, so we can best serve your needs as well as those of the staff at FSA. If you need printed information about your farming operation or map layout copies, we can best provide this crucial information to you with advanced notification.

SURE Program Qualifications

Permanent disaster assistance, through a National trust fund, has been established with the new Farm Bill.

Supplemental REvenue Assistance Program (SURE) is a REVENUE based program: To qualify, producers must have suffered a 50% REVENUE loss on all FCIC insurable and Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP) covered crops and practices. TOTAL FARM REVENUE calculation is the SUM of:

- Estimated value each crop (Acres harvested X estimated yield X Nat'l. average market price for each crop **<plus>**)
- 15 percent of any Direct DCP payments issued **<plus>**
- Total of Counter-Cyclical or Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) payments **<plus>**
- Total of all marketing loan proceeds (including certificate gains) **<plus>**
- Total amount of all Crop Insurance or NAP indemnities **<plus>**
- Value of any other natural disaster assistance payments for the same loss.

SURE program payments will be issued to an eligible producer in an amount equal to 60 percent of the difference between the disaster assistance program guarantee and TOTAL FARM REVENUE.

Eligible producers must have at least CAT, NAP or "Buy In" coverage for the applicable year on all revenue producing crops (practices) to be harvested, in which they have a risk. Grazing land (pasture) will be excluded from this insurance requirement along with crops which are not of **economic significance** (a crop which is ex-

pected to contribute at least 10% of the farm's income).

The deadline to purchase Corn and Soybean crop insurance for 2009 is March 15, 2009. Other crops with March 15 insurance or NAP deadline are Forage sorghum, Oats, Potatoes, Sunflowers and all Spring-planted specialty crops grown for food. Eligible producers must be located in a disaster or contiguous county OR have suffered more than a 50% REVENUE loss for all crop acreages, in all counties

FSA has placed a SURE calculator on its website: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/fbapp?area=home&subject=landing&topic=landing>. The calculator and instructions can be easily downloaded and you will be able to calculate an estimated SURE Guarantee, estimated Expected Revenue, estimated Farm Revenue and estimated SURE payment. The calculator is a tool to help with calculations for SURE, but is not the approved software to compute and provide actual payment information.

Direct & Counter-Cyclical Payment (DCP) Program For 2009

Because of the new Farm Bill, county offices have been delayed in moving forward with sign-up for 2009 DCP. Advance Direct Payments of 22% will be available for 2009. Once you know which farms you will operate next season, phone with this information, your crop shares, and, if desired, the month to receive advance payment. We will print your DCP contracts and call when these are ready to sign. With no procedure available at this time for the Payment Limitation, Payment Eligibility and Adjusted Gross Income (AGI), we expect to have customers acknowledge that this procedure is pending. The 2009-2012 AGI rules are not the same for commodity, price support and conservation programs. With AGI ceilings being reduced, farmers will want to study their AGI and how this change relates to them, before certifying to qualify under reduced allowable average income maximums. The new Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program (see below) can replace DCP-Counter-Cyclical portion of the subsidy program and will not be available until March 2009.

DCP and ACRE Highlights

Producers will have two commodity programs to select from under the 2008 Farm Bill. **DCP** program which we have had the past six years will continue to be available. Rates you will receive will be the same as they have been in the past. Payments will continue to be based on the number of base (history) acres established for the farm. All deadlines and 22% advance payment rate for direct payments remains the same. For 2009 - 2011 direct payments computation is at 83.3% of base acres, rather than 85% as before. The new Average Crop Revenue Election (**ACRE**) provides protection on crops a producer plants, not on a farm's historical planting.

With ACRE, Counter-Cyclical payments are removed. ACRE requires a 20% reduction in Direct payments and a 30% reduction in marketing assistance loan rates.

A farm must have base acres for participation. Producers may participate in ACRE on one farm and DCP on another farm, as long as ALL associated producers agree. Payments under ACRE are made on crop(s) planted on the farm, not the base acre crops. All producers will be given the option to make this election to enroll in ACRE.

To participate, producers are REQUIRED to provide five years of production data and annually submit production records. The election to participate in ACRE is irrevocable. Once a producer selects ACRE participation, the farm is no longer eligible for DCP through the end of the 2008 Farm Bill in 2012. Deadline for ACRE enrollment is June 1 annually, the same as for DCP. Participants may receive two types of payments: Direct and ACRE payments, equivalent to Counter-Cyclical payments under DCP. There will be no advance payments under ACRE.

ACRE calculators are available on several university websites to determine if this program will be viable for any of your farms. There is much to learn about this program and regulations for ACRE have not been finalized to date. The ACRE program will not be rolled out until March of 2009.

More information on 2009 DCP/ACRE, Payment Eligibility and AGI requirements will be available soon.

Presidential Disaster Designation Declared For 33 Ohio Counties Decision Allows Farmers to Apply For USDA Assistance

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has designated a Presidential disaster declaration for 33 counties in Ohio as primary agricultural natural disaster areas, making certain farmers and other agricultural producers in the counties eligible for low-interest emergency loans from USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA).

A Presidential disaster declaration designated the following counties as primary natural disaster areas, due to the severe wind storm associated with Tropical Depression Ike that occurred **September 14, 2008**. Those counties are: Ashland, Brown, Butler, Carroll, Champain, Clark, Clermont, Clinton, Coshocton, Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Greene, Guernsey, Hamilton, Harrison, Highland, Hocking, Holmes, Knox, Licking, Madison, Miami, Montgomery, Morrow, Perry, Pickaway, Preble, Shelby, **Summit**, Tuscarawas, Union and Warren counties.

Counties eligible because they are contiguous to those listed above are: Adams, Athens, Auglaize, Belmont, Columbiana, Crawford, Cuyahoga, Darke, Fayette, Geauga, Hardin, Huron, Jefferson, Logan, Lorain, Marion, Medina, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Pike, **Portage**, Richland, Ross, Stark, Vinton and Wayne counties.

All counties listed above were designated a Presidential disaster declaration on October 24, 2008 making all qualified farm operators in the designated areas eligible for low-interest emergency loans from USDA's FSA, provided eligibility requirements are met. To qualify, farmers must be unable to obtain credit from commercial sources. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part or all of

their actual losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. FSA has a variety of programs, in addition to the emergency loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity.

Interested farmers should contact their local FSA county office to set up an appointment with a loan approval official for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures.

Foreign Investors Who Hold Agricultural Land

Foreign investors, who buy, sell or hold a direct or indirect interest in U.S. agricultural land must report their holdings and transactions to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. Failure to timely file an accurate report can result in a penalty with fines up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the agricultural land. Foreign persons who are buying or selling land must report the transaction **within 90 days of the date of the transaction.**

Who Must Report:

- Individuals who are not U.S. citizens or citizens of the Northern Mariana Islands or the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands;
- Individuals who are not lawfully admitted to the U.S. for permanent residence or who are not paroled into the U.S. under the Immigration and Nationality Act;
- Any organization created under laws of a foreign government or which has located its principle place of business outside the U.S.;
- Any U.S. organization in which a significant interest or substantial control is directly or indirectly held by foreign individuals, organizations or governments; and
- Any foreign governments.

What to Report:

- Each tract of agricultural land in the U.S., its territories, the Northern Mariana Islands and the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands owned by persons required to report; and
- Leaseholds of 10 years or more.

USDA designated the FSA to collect the AFIDA report forms. Individuals wanting to obtain an AFIDA report form (FSA-153) may do so from any FSA County office. The (FSA-153) is available in both English and Spanish translations. You can also go on-line and download the form at:
http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/efcommon/eFileServices/Forms/FSA0153_010524V02.pdf.

Although interested parties may obtain a report form from any FSA County office, the completed form must be returned to the FSA County office where the land or

where the programs are administered.

Foreign investors should contact your local FSA if this pertains to you. To locate the Farm Service Agency county office, you can look in the telephone book white pages or go on-line to: www.fsa.usda.gov/oh and then click on the "County Offices" link. Then click on the county where the land is located.

Minority Farm Register

The USDA Minority Farm Register is a tool to promote equal access to USDA farm programs and services for minority farmland owners, farmers, tenants, and other individuals with an agricultural interest. Participants may receive information or be personally contacted through USDA outreach efforts. USDA programs include direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans, marketing loans, as well as conservation, housing & rural business, and risk management.

Participation in the Register is voluntary. All minority persons involved in farming are encouraged to participate. The information you provide may be shared through the USDA Office of Outreach with other USDA-approved outreach partners such as community-based organizations, educational institutions, and other government agencies.

If you are involved with farming and wish to be included in the Minority Farm Register, you are invited to visit the local county office staff and request the register form or download the form from the FSA Website at:

http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/ad2035_040729v01.pdf.

Dates to Remember	
Dec. 8	Request for Referendum on the Pork Checkoff Program begins.
Dec. 25	Christmas Day Holiday. FSA Offices Closed.
Jan. 1	New Year's Day Holiday. FSA Offices Closed.
Jan. 1	Elected Committee Members and alternates take office.
Jan. 2	Last day to return form <i>LS-54-1</i> and supporting documentation for the Request for Referendum on the Pork Checkoff Program to the FSA County office.
Jan. 19	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday. FSA Offices Closed.
Jan. 31	Deadline on 2008 LDPs for wool, mohair and unshorn lamb pelts.
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve Program.

The Portage-Summit FSA Newsletter and more information can be found online at:

www.fsa.usda.gov/oh



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