



# UP Ag Connections

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## NEWS & VIEWS

By Frank Wardynski, MSU Extension Educator

Inside the newsletter, you'll find the registration form and class listing for the Ag for Tomorrow conference. This year's main theme is directed towards soil health. We'll have several sessions directed towards the use of cover crops, using livestock and soil testing to evaluate soil health. We'll have several other classes with various other interests also. Dr. Bob Robinson, MDA State Veterinarian will be one of the presenters and available for many to meet. There will be sessions with updates from the MSU Research and Extension Center (REC) in Chatham and Jim Hoorman will be the keynote speaker. Jim's expertise is in utilizing cover crops to improve soil health.

I think it's a great theme for the time. Soil health has become a hot topic in agriculture today and is considered one of the next frontiers in research and in moving agriculture forward. Soil health is also an important component to the research activities being conducted at the MSU REC. Recently, soil organism populations are being evaluated as an indicator of soil health. Consequently, management practices that promote soil organism growth are being looked upon as favorable while practices that set populations back are being frowned upon by some.

If you'll notice in the lineup of classes for the conference, we don't have a session dedicated to the impacts of tillage. We don't have a session because we didn't find the person that could address the broad array of tillage systems and soil health impact. I know producers that don't believe soil should be tilled. Gabe Brown, farmer from South Dakota and keynote speaker at last year's Forage and Grazing Conference believes so strongly that soil should not be tilled that he is very particular in the type of coulters he uses on his no-till drill, because some coulters are too aggressive. I know farmers that implement organic farming practices and use tillage as an important piece of their weed control strategies. That's a pretty big range in philosophy.

In last month's News and Views, I talked about the difference between defending our management practices versus being defensive about them. I grew up in Illinois on a corn, soybean, and cattle farm. Our tillage practices were fairly similar to most everyone else's. The degree of tillage decreased significantly over the years. I've spent quite a bit of time in Illinois over the past few months and have been watching the progress of tillage through this last fall and winter. Fall tillage continues to dominate the management practices back home in Illinois. No-till usually is reserved for highly erodible lands.

I really don't like driving tractors. My entire life I'd rather move cows than turn steering wheels. So this soil health and no-till has me interested. I started asking farmers about using no-till. The answer was similar for everyone, reduced yield with no-till. As I asked about how long they had tried no-till, what they had done to improve their no-till management, if they were giving no-till a fair try or just using it on low quality highly erodible lands, their answers were more defensive than defending.

I think soil health is going to be an interesting and exciting part of agriculture moving forward. It will be important to be objective in evaluating soil health impacts. I also believe it will be important to stay balanced as we evaluate soils health, not just in organism population but to continue to look at the whole, including physical structure, chemical makeup, organic matter, water holding capacity, pH, etc. Just like the upcoming [Ag for Tomorrow Conference](#), the evolution of how we look at soil health is going to be exciting. ~Frank

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### Registered Maine Anjou and Angus CLAY KNOLL FARMS



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Gladwin, MI

**MARKET REPORT** (1/27/15)  
 By Frank Wardynski, MSU Extension Educator

**Market Ready Prices**

Choice Steers	\$135-\$162	per 100 lbs.
Holstein Steers	\$130-\$150	per 100 lbs.
Hogs	\$64-\$78	per 100 lbs.
Lambs	\$140-\$150	per 100 lbs.
Cull cows	\$90-\$108	per 100 lbs.
Calves	\$90-\$300	per 100 lbs.
Goats	\$150-\$200	per 100 lbs.

**Breeding and Feeder Animals**

Grade Holstein cows	\$2000 - 3000	per head
Grade Holstein bred heifers	\$2300 - 3100	per head

**Feed Prices across the U.P.**

	Avg. \$/cwt	Avg. \$/ton	Price Range
Corn	\$11.00	\$220.00	\$180-260
Soymeal	\$26.33	\$526.50	\$439-614
Oats	\$15.80	\$316.00	\$250-382
Barley	\$13.08	\$261.50	\$175-348
Average price/100 wt. for 1 ton lots			

**Wanted & For Sale Listings**

Personal ads will be removed monthly. We reserve the right to edit your ad. Free ads must be no more than 110 spaces. Please respect the space requirements. You can always purchase an ad if more space is required. Please call or email your ad no later than the 15th of each month. Call the Ontonagon County MSU Extension office at 906-884-4386 or email msue66@msu.edu.

For Sale—Schoessow 20 Ft. Arrow Front Heavy Duty Feeder Wagon. Excellent Condition \$1200. Phone 906-988-2397

Hay For Sale—600 Available. 1st, 2nd and 3rd cutting of Alfalfa and Alfalfa mix. Round Bales—Net wrapped 4X6. Also Silage bales available 4X5. High quality prices range from \$70-\$180 per ton. Phone 906-644-2880

Hay For Sale Qty. 2200—70 lb. twine bales Clover grass mix. \$3.50 each Phone 906-246-3049

Hay For Sale—Qty. 5000 small square bales. Grass trefoil mix—very good horse hay located in Bruce Crossing. Phone 906-827-3827 John Talsma



# Michigan Cattlemen's Association

**MCA/MSU BULL SALE:**  
**March 21, 2015 – 12:30 (EST)**  
 Open House at Station: March 7, 2015  
 325 Mount Hope Rd, Crystal, MI  
 (Angus, Charolais, Hereford, Red Angus, Simmental)  
 Brian Plank: (989) 506-2061  
 MI Cattlemen's Association:  
 (517) 347-8117  
[www.mibulls.com](http://www.mibulls.com)  
 Online bidding at [www.uproducers.com](http://www.uproducers.com)

**Livestock & Soil Health**

When agriculture started in the UP, it was always livestock and cropping since every farm had horses, cattle, usually a few dairy cows, and other miscellaneous "livestock" running around. And, with our long winters, some cropping was always needed to produce feed for the winter. The trend away from this farming model started after WWII with increased mechanization and fertility in a bag instead of the by-product of animal production. In fact, it wasn't that long ago that manure was considered a "waste" product and even washing down the creek in the spring was an acceptable way to dispose of your manure. Obviously not all farmers felt that way but today we are beginning to see a much different attitude to making the most of manure. But, not all farms can get manure on all fields every year and hay fields that support beef cow calf operations probably see the least amount of manure. Is manure and urine the only way livestock can impact soils and their fertility?

I will limit my discussion to only nitrogen to keep this article short and also key in on what is often the most limiting soil nutrient. The most important thing to understand is that in 1% of organic matter there is about 1000 pounds of nitrogen, 3000 pounds of N in soil with 3% organic matter. By way of microbial conversion, mineralization, about 2~4% of this N, will be converted from organic N (unavailable) to inorganic N (nitrate or available N) or 20 ~ 40 lb of N for each 1% organic matter each year. This is why you can see fields that are hayed every year with no fertilizer or manure that continue to provide "some" hay every year. It's almost impossible to mine out a soil because the microbial population continues to mineralize the nutrients in the soil. It goes back to the life in the soil and appreciating that the "health" of the bugs has a lot to do with yield we get from our crops and hay fields.

How to make happy bugs or the big 4 of soil health: Minimize tillage, keep soil covered, keep living roots in the soil, and promote a plant diversity. There is currently a huge interest in no-till, cover crops and health soil from the cash crop perspective. I want to key in on hay and pasture because they are often overlooked when you consider soil health and those are the #1 crops in the UP. It would seem that hay and pasture should be naturally healthy soil crops; minimal tillage, live roots, soil cover, but maybe a little weak in the plant diversity area. Hay and "short grazed" pasture are not tilled and therefore do not destroy the "homes" of the bacterial, fungi, worms, etc., but often the soil is not covered. Having a soil residue cover is very important to catching all the rain that falls and also moderating soil temperatures.

*Continued.....*

### *Livestock and Soil Health continued ....*

High soil temperatures can greatly increase moisture evaporation and also can kill the soil microbes. Having live roots in the soil is good but there is a very dynamic relationship between the roots and the soil life as the plants can secrete up to 40% of their carbon photosynthates via their roots to the rhizosphere, the area close to the roots where the microbes live. The plants provide the carbon from their photosynthesis processes to the bugs and the bugs mineralize the N (and other nutrients) for the plants. The diversity is critical because each kind of plant can support a limited variety of soil life. More kinds of plants means better mineralization and more nutrients available.

Where do cows (and other livestock) figure into this equation? One of the most important things about animals is that when an animal lives on just the forage produced from the land, manure and urine will return 80+% of the nutrients to the soil, assuming the manure and urine is returned to where the forage was harvested. In addition, the digestion by the bugs in the animal will make those nutrients more available to the plant. (Remember the downside that inorganic nutrients are also more likely to be lost via volatilization or leaching.) If the animal received supplemental feed or the hay was purchased off farm, then you could be actually adding nutrients to your farm. But there's more- when animals graze, they stimulate the plants to release exudates and can also stimulate a compensatory rate of regrowth. By grazing just part of a cover crop or pasture forage, the animals tell the plant to feed the bugs, some roots are shed, and the plant increases its regrowth. In addition, the parts of the plants not eaten are trampled to the ground where the soil organisms can begin the recycling process while covering the soil surface. Clipping and grazing will not have the same impact because clipping is a clean cutting and will remove all the green material. Even a well trampled pasture will have some green material that will continue to photosynthesis and pump C into the roots and rhizosphere.

In summary, this very short overview will hopefully give you some ideas on how we need to "enhance and engage" the soil life. We need to manage our forage harvest to feed the soil life to grow forage to feed our animals to provide us with an income. It's a system and by including soil life in our management, we can grow more feed using management and sunshine and decrease our purchased inputs.

Ben Bartlett DVM - *For more discussion - see you at the "Ag for Tomorrow" Program*



Contact: Jim Isleib  
Alger County MSU Extension  
906-387-2530, email [isleibj@anr.msu.edu](mailto:isleibj@anr.msu.edu)

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Beginning farmers on-line training offered by MSU Extension People who are starting new farm businesses, or thinking about it, will benefit from participating in the MSU Extension 2015 Beginning Farmer Webinar Series. You will gain knowledge needed to plan your start-up farming operation, or add a new enterprise to an existing farm. A series of twenty, 2-hour evening webinars covering a wide variety of farm-related topics is available, including: "Getting started with...."

- ...Small Grain Production, Jan. 26
- ...Cover Crops in Organic Vegetable Crop Rotations, Feb. 2
- ...Integrated Pest Management, Feb. 4
- ...Manure Storage, Handling and Mortality Management on Small Farms, Feb. 11
- ...Beekeeping for Pollination and Honey, Feb 13
- ...Value-Added Agriculture, Feb. 18
- ...Farm Food Safety, Feb 23
- ...Sheep and Goat Management, March 2
- ...USDA Organic Certification, March 9
- ...Hop Production, March 11
- ...Season Extension, March 16
- ...Marketing, March 18
- ...Small Fruit Production, March 23
- ...Beef Cow-Calf Production, March 25
- ...Direct Marketing, March 30
- ...Managing Soil, Irrigation and Fertilization Interactions, April 1
- ...Cover Crops in Field Crop Rotations, April 6
- ...Poultry Production, April 20
- ...Small Farm Equipment, April 27
- ...Beef Feedlot Management, April 29

A fee of \$10 per webinar is required, or you can register for the entire series for \$100. Webinar recordings will be provided to all registered participants. Participate from the comfort and convenience of your own home or office. Registration, a brochure containing details on each individual program, and on-line or mailed payment options can be found at <http://events.anr.msu.edu/beginningfarmerwebinars/>.

Each program begins at 7 pm eastern time and will last about 2 hours. A high-speed internet connection is required. You will receive webinar connection information after you register. Contact the Alger County MSU Extension office at 906-387-2530 or [isleibj@anr.msu.edu](mailto:isleibj@anr.msu.edu) for more information.

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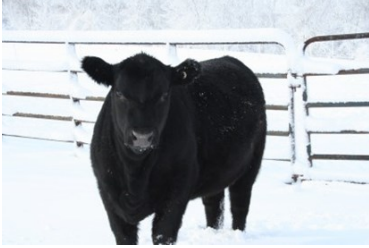
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## Top four strategies for keeping your 4-H animal projects healthy in cold weather

Use these four steps to help keep your 4-H animals healthy during the long Michigan winters.

Posted on **January 26, 2015** by **Julie Thelen**, Michigan State University Extension



Good animal management strategies can help to keep your 4-H projects healthy and happy all winter long.

Photo credit: Julie Thelen | MSU Extension

As the winter temperatures settle in, make sure you are keeping your 4-H projects healthy! Most animals are well adapted to living outside, so for them the cold isn't as bad as it is to you or me. However, just like added heat in the summer, cold temperatures require additional animal monitoring.

Follow these four steps to make sure your 4-H projects are healthy this winter.

1. Make sure animals have plenty of **fresh air**. Although it seems natural to close all of the barn doors in the winter, similar to how you seal your house up tight, remember animals are different. To help keep them healthy and prevent the spread of bacteria and viruses, make sure you have adequate ventilation.
2. **Water, water, water!** Whether providing water in a bucket, tank or automated system, it is important to check the water each day. If you are like many farms, you have probably experienced a frozen water tank or two. That is why it's important to check the water supply every day: realizing the issue and reacting to it are essential in keeping animals healthy and on track for market or reproduction. The temperature of the water can also play a role in animal production. One study from the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine stated that ponies drank approximately 40 percent more water when it was warm, rather than ambient near-freezing water. No matter what the temperature, make sure the water you are providing your animals is clean and easily available in adequate amounts.
3. Know what is in your **feed!** Knowing the contents and the quality of the feed you are offering to animals is essential in making sure they have adequate nutrition to meet their energy requirements. Researchers at Oregon State University mention the "lowest critical environmental temperatures for livestock vary according to species and researchers, but 20 or 32 degrees Fahrenheit are often used as the lowest temperature dry livestock can tolerate without additional energy demands to support normal body temperature." Paying attention to the amount of feed consumed as well as the temperature is important in keeping your animal on track!
4. Pay special attention to **young and new animals**. Just like young children, younger animals and especially newborn animals are more susceptible to the cold weather. When new animals are born, make sure they are dried off in a reasonable amount of time. Additionally, remember how crucial it is for animals to receive their first milk, colostrum

Four strategies continued ....

If transporting new animals to your farm, make sure you minimize the amount of stress they will encounter as well as provide adequate dry, minimal dust bedding to help reduce the effect of winter chill.

Although it's cold outside, these good animal management strategies can help to keep your 4-H projects healthy and happy all winter long! Youth can learn more animal management tips at Michigan State University Extension 4-H events like the 4-H Beef, Sheep and Swine Teen and Adult Leaders Workshop and through other related news articles.

This article was published by **Michigan State University Extension**. For more information, visit <http://www.msue.msu.edu>. To contact an expert in your area, visit <http://expert.msue.msu.edu>, or call 888-678-3464.

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### *Sulfonamide and Tetracycline testing in milk*

Michigan Milk Producers Association has notified their members that some of the processors that purchase milk from the co-operative will now be requiring screening of raw milk for sulfonamide and tetracycline residues, in addition to beta-lactams. The Charm-ROSA test will be used to screen loads of milk at the plant and if positive, confirmation will be done with the Charm II assay. The Charm ROSA detects sulfadimethoxine at 1 ppb and oxytetracycline at 10 to 30 ppb. These drug concentrations are below the tolerances set by the FDA. The Charm II detects sulfonamides and oxytetracycline at higher concentrations (4 and 67 ppb, respectively) but loads of milk found positive on the ROSA screening test and not positive on the Charm II confirmatory test may be difficult to market.

Dairy producers who have become complacent with "beta-lactam only" testing of milk for residues may be caught unaware of these changes. In the future, it is expected that more processors are going to demand stricter criteria for drug residues in milk before purchasing milk, regardless of FDA guidelines. This is an important opportunity to spend time with your dairy clients and carefully review drug use protocols and residue avoidance plans on the farm.

Ron Erskine  
erskine@msu.edu  
517-353-4637

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### **Cover Crop meetings for the U.P.**

Dr. Dean Baas from MSU will be in the UP holding cover crop meetings in February. Details were in the January UP Ag Connections newsletter.

Register to attend any of these meetings by calling the Alger County MSU Extension Office at 906-387-2530, or register by email to [isleibj@anr.msu.edu](mailto:isleibj@anr.msu.edu).

Monday, February 9, 2015 - Rudyard Township Hall, Chippewa Co, 7-9 pm

Tuesday, February 10, 2015 - MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center, Chatham, Alger Co, 7-9 pm

Wednesday, February 11, 2015 - Houghton County MSU Extension Office, Hancock, 7-9 pm

Thursday, February 12, 2015 - Delta County MSU Extension Office, Escanaba, 7-9 pm

## **BQA Best Management Practices: Feed additives and medications for the cow-calf producer**

**Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) has Best Management Practices (BMP's) for each segment of the industry, an example would be: cow-calf, or feedlot. This article will focus on the BMP's specific to feed additives and medications for the cow-calf producer.**

Posted on **January 27, 2015** by **Kable Thurlow**, Michigan State University Extension

In my last Michigan State University Extension article entitled *What is BQA and why should I consider certification*, the focus was on defining BQA and describing how it should be relevant to beef producers. In this article, the goal is to break BQA down into BMP's and describe it in more detail, the section for this article is feed additives and medications for the cow-calf producer.

A quick review of the BQA guidelines show that they exist to help producers to ensure a high quality end product that meets or exceeds expectations every time. The cow-calf producers main product is weaned calves, and culled breeding stock. The calves need to be of the quality that will meet or exceed the requirements of the next segment of the industry, whether that is directly to the feedlot, or the stocker operation. The term "quality" for those calves would mean that they consistently hit the mark in terms of animal performance, health, carcass characteristics, and food safety in terms of medications and feed additives. Culled breeding stock must also meet the requirements of the processors of market cows and market bulls in terms of health and food safety, plus carcass characteristics for quality. Written records were mentioned in the last part, and they are extremely important when following BQA guidelines and these records become even more valuable when they are passed along to the next segment of the industry with the cattle. It is important to keep in mind that quality goes well beyond food safety, encompassing performance, health, carcass characteristics, and consumer eating satisfaction.

The national guidelines for feed additives and medications state that beef producers should:

- Use only FDA approved medicated feed additives in rations
- Use medicated feed additives in accordance with the FDA current Good Manufacturing Practices
- Follow judicious antibiotic use guidelines
- Extra label use of feed additives is illegal and strictly prohibited
- Strictly adhere to medication withdrawal times to avoid a violative residue
- Where applicable, keep complete records when formulating or feeding medicated feed rations
- Records are to be kept a minimum of two years, or longer as required by laws or regulations
- Assure that all additives are withdrawn at the proper time to avoid a violative residue

There are many faucets to Beef Quality Assurance, it is imperative that each beef producer takes the time to learn what is there for the particular segment of the industry that they are involved in. Once they have identified those, they then need to take the steps necessary to becoming certified. The certification process has been made very convenient by having all of the modules available in an online format. Producers can also attend an in-person meeting if one is available in their area.

For more information on BQA, visit the MSU Beef Team website, or contact one of the Michigan State University Extension Beef Educators in your area. Beef Producers are also welcome to contact me directly at [thurlowk@msu.edu](mailto:thurlowk@msu.edu).

This article was published by **Michigan State University Extension**. For more information, visit <http://www.msue.msu.edu>. To contact an expert in your area, visit <http://expert.msue.msu.edu>, or call 888-678-3464.

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## **February 2015 - FSA News**

### **NEW ARC/PLC PROGRAM DEADLINES RAPIDLY APPROACHING**

Producers are reminded that the deadline to update yield history and/or reallocate base acres is **February 27, 2015**. Farm owners and producers can choose between the new 2014 Farm Bill established programs, Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) through March 31, 2015. The new programs, designed to help producers better manage risk, usher in one of the most significant reforms to U.S. farm programs in decades.

USDA helped create online tools to assist in the decision process, allowing farm owners and producers to enter information about their operation and see projections that show what ARC and/or PLC will mean for them under possible future scenarios. Farm owners and producers can access the online resources, available at [www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc), from the convenience of their home computer or mobile device at any time.

Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium grain rice (which includes short grain rice), safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat. Upland cotton is no longer a covered commodity. Dates associated with ARC and PLC that farm owners and producers need to know:

- Now through Feb. 27, 2015: Farm owners may visit their local Farm Service Agency office to update yield history and/or reallocate base acres.
- Now through March 31, 2015: Producers make a one-time election between ARC and PLC for the 2014 through 2018 crop years.
- Mid-April 2015 through summer 2015: Producers sign contracts for 2014 and 2015 crop years.
- October 2015: Payments issued for 2014 crop year, if needed.

To learn more about which safety net options are most appropriate for specific farming operations, farmers can use new Web tools at [www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc), which can be accessed from the convenience of a home computer or a mobile device at any time. To learn more about upcoming educational meetings, farmers can contact their local Farm Service Agency county office at <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>.

### **USDA REMINDS FARMERS OF 2014 FARM BILL CONSERVATION COMPLIANCE CHANGES**

The 2014 Farm Bill implements a change that requires farmers to have a Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation Certification (AD-1026) on file.

## **February 2015 - FSA News—continued**

### **USDA REMINDS FARMERS OF 2014 FARM BILL CONSERVATION COMPLIANCE CHANGES continued**

For farmers to be eligible for premium support on their federal crop insurance, a completed and signed AD-1026 certification form must be on file with the FSA. The Risk Management Agency (RMA), through the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC), manages the federal crop insurance program that provides the modern farm safety net for American farmers and ranchers.

Since enactment of the 1985 Farm Bill, eligibility for most commodity, disaster, and conservation programs has been linked to compliance with the highly erodible land conservation and wetland conservation provisions. The 2014 Farm Bill continues the requirement that producers adhere to conservation compliance guidelines to be eligible for most programs administered by FSA and NRCS. This includes most financial assistance such as the new price and revenue protection programs, the Conservation Reserve Program, the Livestock Disaster Assistance programs and Marketing Assistance Loans and most programs implemented by FSA. It also includes the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the Conservation Stewardship Program, and other conservation programs implemented by NRCS.

Many FSA and Natural Resource Conservation (NRCS) programs already have implemented this requirement and therefore most producers should already have an AD-1026 form on file for their associated lands. If however an AD-1026 form has not been filed or is incomplete then farmers are reminded of the deadline of June 1, 2015. When a farmer completes and submits the AD-1026 certification form, FSA and NRCS staff will review the associated farm records and outline any additional actions that may be required to meet the required compliance with the conservation compliance provisions.

FSA recently released a revised form AD-1026, which is available at USDA Service Centers and online at: [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov). USDA will publish a rule later this year that will provide details outlining the connection of conservation compliance with crop insurance premium support. Producers can also contact their local USDA Service Center for information. A listing of service center locations is available at [offices.usda.gov](http://offices.usda.gov).

### **DON'T MISS THE DEADLINE – Important Dates to**

#### **Remember**

February 27, 2015 – Deadline to update ARC/PLC yield history and/or reallocated base acres

March 15, 2014 – Deadline to purchase NAP coverage for Peas, Oats/Barley for Forage, Sorghum, Beans, Potatoes, Triticale, Vegetables, Corn Grain in Chippewa, Barley Grain in Luce.

### **MICROLOAN CAP GROWS TO \$50,000**

Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds farmers and ranchers that the FSA borrowing limit for microloans increased from \$35,000 to \$50,000, effective Nov. 7. Microloans offer borrowers simplified lending with less paperwork.

The microloan change allows beginning, small and mid-sized farmers to access an additional \$15,000 in loans using a simplified application process with up to seven years to repay. Microloans are part of USDA's continued commitment to [small and midsized farming operations](#).

To complement the microloan program additional changes to FSA eligibility requirements will enhance beginning farmers and ranchers access to land, a key barrier to entry level producers. FSA policies related to farm experience have changed so that other types of skills may be considered to meet the direct farming experience required for farm ownership loan eligibility. Operation or management of non-farm businesses, leadership positions while serving in the military or advanced education in an agricultural field will now count towards the experience applicants need to show when applying for farm ownership loans.

**Important Note:** *Microloans cannot be used to purchase real estate.*

Since 2010, FSA has made a record amount of farm loans — more than 165,000 loans totaling nearly \$23 billion. More than 50 percent of USDA's farm loans now go to beginning farmers. In addition, FSA has increased its lending to socially-disadvantaged producers by nearly 50 percent since 2010. Please review the FSA [Microloan Program Fact Sheet](#) for program application, eligibility and related information.

### **USDA ANNOUNCES NEW SUPPORT FOR BEGINNING FARMERS & RANCHERS**

*Department Implementing New Farm Bill Programs, Unveiling New Centralized Online Resource to Support Next Generation of Farmers* USDA has announced the implementation of new Farm Bill measures and other policy changes to improve the financial security of new and beginning farmers and ranchers. USDA also unveiled [www.USDA.gov/newfarmers](http://www.USDA.gov/newfarmers), a new website that will provide a centralized, one-stop resource where beginning farmers and ranchers can explore the variety of USDA initiatives designed to help them succeed.

USDA's [www.usda.gov/newfarmers](http://www.usda.gov/newfarmers) has in depth information for new farmers and ranchers, including: how to increase access to land and capital; build new market opportunities; participate in conservation opportunities; select and use the right risk management tools; and access USDA education, and technical support programs. These issues have been identified as top priorities by new farmers. The website will also feature instructive case studies about beginning farmers who have successfully utilized USDA resources to start or expand their business operations. Today's policy announcements in support of beginning farmers and ranchers include:

- Waiving service fees for new and beginning farmers or ranchers to enroll in the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for the 2014 crop year. NAP provides risk management tools to farmers who grow crops for which there is no crop insurance product. Under this waiver, announced via an [official notice](#) to Farm Service Agency offices, farmers and ranchers whom already enrolled in NAP for the 2014 crop year and certified to being a beginning farmer or social disadvantaged farmer are eligible for a service fee refund.
- Eliminating payment reductions under the [Conservation Reserve Program](#) (CRP) for new and beginning farmers which will allow routine, prescribed, and emergency grazing outside the primary nesting season on enrolled land consistent with approved conservation plans. Previously, farmers and ranchers grazing on CRP land were subject to a reduction in CRP payments of up to 25 percent. Waiving these reductions for new and beginning farmers will provide extra financial support during times of emergency like drought and other natural disasters.
- Increasing payment rates to beginning farmers and ranchers under Emergency Assistance for [Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program](#) (ELAP). Under this provision, beginning farmers can claim up 90 percent of losses for lost livestock, such as bees, under ELAP. This is a fifty percent increase over previously available payment amounts to new and beginning farmers.

### **GREAT INTEREST RATES: Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL)**

**Remember: these loans are now available for Hay/Forage Storage as well as traditional grain storage!**

January Interest Rates: 2.000 percent for 7 years with a loan of \$100,000 or less  
2.250 percent for 10 years with a loan of \$100,000 - \$250,000  
2.375 percent for 12 years with a loan of \$250,000 - \$500,000

Contact your local FSA county office for February's interest rates

Please say "THANK YOU" to our sponsors.



Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association

Waukon, Iowa  
Feeder Sales Schedule

\* May-August: 2nd & 4th Thursdays  
\* Sept-April: 2nd & 4th Wednesdays

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**\*\*\*If you do not wish to receive this publication, please contact the Ontonagon County MSUE office at 906-884-4386.**

**Meetings & Events Calendar**

**February**

- February 4, 2015 Wednesday 8:30 – 12:30 (CST) review, exams at 1 pm- Pesticide applicator core manual review and state exams State Office Building, Escanaba, MI
- February 9, 2015 Monday 7-9:00 pm- Cover crop meeting, Rudyard Township Hall, Rudyard, MI
- February 10, 2015 Tuesday 7-9:00 pm - Cover crop meeting, MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center, Chatham, MI
- February 11, 2015 Wednesday 7-9:00 pm - Cover crop meeting, Houghton County MSU Extension Office, Hancock, MI
- February 12, 2015, Thursday 7-9:00 pm - Cover crop meeting, Delta County MSU Extension Office, Escanaba, MI
- February 20, 2015, Friday 1-4:00 pm MSU Extension dry bean educational program, MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center, Chatham, MI
- February 23, 2015 Monday 6:30 pm—9:00 pm Beef Cow-Calf Meeting, Bay College Heirman Center, 2001 N. Lincoln Rd. Escanaba, MI
- February 24, 2015 Tuesday 6:30 pm—9:00 pm Beef Cow-Calf Meeting, MDARD 16860 M32 East, Atlanta, MI
- February 25, 2015 Wednesday 6:30 pm—9:00 pm Beef Cow-Calf Meeting MSU Livestock Pavilion, 4301 Farm Lane, Lansing, MI
- February 26, 2015 Thursday 6:30 pm –9:00 pm Beef Cow-Calf Meeting Mid Michigan Community College, 1375 S. Clare Ave., Harrison, MI

**March**

- March 2, 2015 Monday 6:30 pm—9:00 pm Beef Cow-Calf Meeting Rudyard Twnshp Hall, Rudyard, MI
- March 3, 2015 Tuesday 6:30 pm—9:00 pm Beef Cow-Calf Meeting Twilly’s Restaurant, Bruce Crossing, MI
- March 7, 2015 Saturday Michigan Cattlemen Association Open House at the Station, 325 Mount Hope Rd, Crystal, MI
- March 10, 2015 Tuesday AG For Tomorrow Conference, Bay College, Escanaba, MI
- March 14, 2015 Saturday 8:30 am—4:00 pm Sheep goat event see page 6 for details
- March 21, 2015 Saturday – 12:30 (EST) MCA/MSU Bull Sale, Crystal, MI. Contact Brian Plank: (989) 506-2061

**April**

**U.P. Agriculture  
 Connection**

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