

CONNECTIONS

CONSERVATION DISTRICT, EXTENSION SERVICE, FARM SERVICE AGENCY, & NATURAL RESOURCES & CONSERVATION SERVICE

August, 2009

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP - formerly the Conservation Security Program) will be open for applications beginning August 10th through September 30th, 2009. While the former CSP was implemented on a watershed basis, the signup is now continuous and is offered statewide.

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is a voluntary conservation program that encourages producers to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by:

- Undertaking additional conservation activities; and
- Improving, maintaining, and managing existing conservation activities.

The entire operation must be enrolled and must include all eligible land that will be under the applicant's control for the term of the proposed contract.

CSP offers participants two possible types of payments, although the dollar values for these are unknown:

- Annual payment for installing and adopting additional activities, and improving, maintaining, and managing existing activities
- Supplemental payment for the adoption of resource-conserving crop rotations

This CSP is quite different from the signup in 2005. There are no longer tiers associated and all the land that you operate and control for the 5 year contract must be included. While we are still waiting for more details and forms for the program to be released there are still some things you can do to prepare an application. You can start by compiling the following records and documents:

1. AD1026 (FSA form)
2. 156EZ
3. Proof of Control on leased land
4. Entity Documents (for corporations and partnerships) 901 and/or 902 (dated 4/09 and 3/09 if this is proof of signature authority for entities)
5. Maps delineating ag operation, offered land, and other pertinent information
6. Signed NRCS-CPA-1200 (application) and Appendix – NRCS form not yet available as of 8/10/09
7. Conservation Measurement Tool (a ranking worksheet being developed)
8. Selected Enhancements (from a list we provide as part of a application packet or see website)

More information can be found on the web at http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/new_csp/ or call or stop by your local NRCS office. 

INSIDE THIS ISSUE	
2	2009 Loan Rates & LDP's
2	Feds Feed Families Program
4	Waste Oil Collection
5	Wetland Determinations
6	Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)

NEW METHODS FOR LOAN REPAYMENT OF GRAIN LOANS

Beginning April 15, FSA will begin using an improved and more stable system for determining loan repayment rates for non-recourse marketing assistance loans and loan deficiency payment rates for wheat, feed grains, pulse crops, oilseeds, wool, mohair and honey.

The 2008 Farm Bill provides the Secretary of Agriculture the authority to establish a loan repayment rate that may be determined as the lesser of the loan rate plus interest and a rate based on:

- 1) average market prices during the previous 30 days, or
- 2) an alternative method the Secretary of Agriculture may develop.

Starting April 15th, the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) will determine and publish daily loan repayment rates based on the average market prices during the preceding 30 days for wheat, corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, barley, oats, canola, flaxseed and sunflower seed. At the same time, CCC will begin announcing each day a repayment rate based on the preceding five days. The effective alternative repayment rate will be the lower of either the 30-day average or the 5-day average.

The 30-day method will reflect a 30-day moving average of all terminal market prices for the crop, adjusted by the difference between the applicable national loan rate and the county loan rate. The 5-day method will reflect a 5-day moving average of applicable terminal market prices adjusted by applicable county differential and terminal adjustments.

The repayment rate for pulse crops (lentils, dry peas, small chickpeas – and starting with the 2009-crop year, large chickpeas), crambe, mustard seed, rapeseed, safflower, sesame seed, wool, mohair and honey will also change starting on or after April 15th. CCC will determine and publish loan repayment rates once a week based on average market prices during the preceding 30 days. CCC will also announce an alternative repayment rate using current methodology each week. The effective repayment rate will be the lower of either

the 30-day average or the alternative repayment rate. An alternative repayment rate will not be available for honey. Loan repayment rates for 2008-crop pulse marketing assistance loans will be based on U.S. grade #1.

Information on programs administered by FSA in MT is available at www.fsa.usda.gov/mt. 

2009 LOAN RATES FOR TOOLE COUNTY

HRS	3.41
HRW	2.54
HAD	4.70
BLY	1.76

WATCH FOR LDP's

As of August 12th the barley LDP was within 12 cents. So for any producers that are not enrolled in the ACRE program, the first page of the CCC-633 EZ needs to be signed before any grain is hauled to the elevator. It's been quite a while since we have dealt with LDP's, so as a reminder they can be done two different ways.

1. On the day you want to take the LDP and the grain is stored on the farm you can certify to the bushels, visit the office and complete page 2 of the form and receive the LDP rate effective for that day.
2. If the grain has been hauled to the elevator you will need to bring a copy of the assembly sheet to the office and the LDP rate used will be the rate in effect for the day it was delivered to the elevator.

For more information, contact the Toole County FSA office. 

FEDS FEEDS FAMILIES PROGRAM

The Toole County Farm Service Agency is joining together with other Federal Agencies within the county for a food drive. All donations will be delivered to the Sagebrush Food Pantry on September 11th. If you would like to make a donation, boxes will be placed at the following locations: USDA Service Center; FSIS OIA; Havre Sector K-9 Border Patrol; MSU Extension Service; FBI.

If you should have any questions, please contact Vickie Sulenes at (406) 450-0893. 

TOOLE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

By: Sara Shepard

The Toole County Conservation District will not be meeting the next couple of months due to harvest time. We are keeping busy though planning for future projects to take place in the fall, and we'll announce them later. Here are some items that you should all be aware of, just a reminder that they are here for your use.

Ownership Maps:

Toole County Wall	\$20.00
Sm Book \$18.00	Large \$25.00
Liberty County Book	\$25.00
Pondera County Book	\$30.00
Glacier County Book	\$25.00

Landscaping Fabric:

6'x 30	\$70.00
6'x 500'	\$98.00

Polymer:

1 lb. b	\$5.00
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Stake Flags:

21" 1 Bundle	\$ 8.00
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Paul Brown Soil Probe: \$ 75.00

Transit and Laser Levels

Deposit: \$100.00 at time of pick up with money refunded if machinery is in good working order, not damaged.

\$100.00 deposit on the Tree Planter and Fabric Layer, money refunded when machinery returned.

Call the Toole County Conservation District office Monday, Tuesday, or Thursday if you have questions on the above items or stop by the office, 406-434-5234 ext. 113. 📍

FOREIGN LANDOWNER NOTIFICATION

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA.

Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. 📍

FARMERS AND RANCHERS QUALIFY FOR SBA LOANS

Small Business owners including farmers and ranchers suffering "immediate financial hardship" may apply for loans through the Small Business Administration (SBA) for up to \$35,000 to provide some temporary financial relief. Following are a few of the highlights of the loans:

- 100% Guarantee by SBA
- Interest free to borrowers
- SBA fees waived
- 12- month Deferred Payments
- Funds used to pay Principal and Interest on small business debt including mortgages, term and Line of Credit (LOC), capital leases, credit card obligations, notes to vendors, suppliers and utilities
- Repayment begins 12 months after the final disbursement
- 5 years to repay
- Loan limit \$35,000

Farmers and ranchers qualify if their net worth is under \$8.5 million and average revenue for the past three year of less than \$750,000.00.

For further information about the ARC loan program logon to the SBA website at <http://www.sba.gov>. 📍

UPCOMING WASTE OIL COLLECTION FOR AREA COUNTIES

By: Jeannie Olmstead

MSU Extension in Pondera, Toole, and Glacier County will be sponsoring a used oil collection event for area residents and agriculture producers October 6 and 7. In our rural area it is difficult to dispose of used oil. This collection will provide an avenue for oil disposal for area residents that have stockpiles of waste oil.

Oily Waste Company of Great Falls will be collecting the waste oil. Pre-registration will be required. Each county will have a central location for the oil collection. Producers may either bring their waste oil to the drop-off site in their county at no charge or have the oil picked up at their farm or ranch for a discounted fee. The cost of having oil collected from individual sites is \$0.25 per gallon for drums or \$0.10 a gallon for tanks.

More information on the oil collection will be available in early September. If you would like to participate please contact the Toole County Extension office at 424-8350, the Glacier County Extension office at 873-2239 or the Pondera County Extension office at 271-4054.



CRP MANAGED HAYING & GRAZING ENDS SEPTEMBER 30

Managed Grazing on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres begins August 2 and ends September 30, 2009. **All livestock must be removed by September 30.**

Managed Haying on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres ends September 30, 2009. **All bales must be removed by September 30th.**

MESSAGE FROM THE FSA STATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR-BRUCE NELSON

I began as the State Executive Director for the Farm Service Agency on July 13th. After eight years of involvement in other venues, I am excited to assume my duties as the State Executive Director for the Farm Service Agency in Montana.

My most recent position was serving as the Chief of Staff to Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer. I have stepped down from my executive roles at Triangle N Farms since becoming FSA State Executive Director.

In every state the agricultural community is unique and has varied needs and concerns and my role, will be to work with USDA to ensure the needs of Montana agricultural producers are met.

Our primary mission at FSA is to assist Montana farmers and ranchers secure the greatest possible benefit from programs administered by FSA such as farm loans, commodity price support, disaster relief, conservation, or other available resources.

The hard working men and women of Montana's 49 FSA county offices are at the forefront of our efforts and remain the primary contact for program participation. We encourage you to speak with the staff at your local FSA office on how we can be of service.

POLICY CHANGED ON DRY PEAS INTENDED USE

Producers of dry peas intended for forage for hay (FG), grazing (GZ), and GM (green manure) are now allowed to include acreage of those intended uses in determining pulse crop base history.

Producers with pulse crop history with the additional eligible intended uses are encouraged to make their election of pulse base acreage as soon as possible.

The farm must be enrolled in DCP or elected/enrolled in ACRE by September 30th to be eligible for either program.

CONNECTING THE DOTS

The Food Security Act of 1985 has both sodbuster and swamp buster provisions, which respectively restrict breaking of native sod and breaking or manipulation of wetlands. This regulation is the reason behind the “dots” that many of you have noticed on your FSA certification maps.

These dots are intended to identify wetlands that have been recorded as part of an inventory conducted in the late 80s and early 90s. NRCS acknowledges that this wetland inventory contains numerous errors. The SCS at that time was charged with completing this inventory in a very short time frame and therefore utilized infrared photography combined with topography and soils maps to read the landscape and identify these wetlands. This was admittedly a flawed method of determining wetlands but seemed the only feasible way to complete the congressionally mandated task at the time.

Given this method there were many errors which the agency recognized and the wetland inventory was determined not credible and wetlands were removed from the maps. Afterwards, wetland designations were handled on a case by case basis and required a site visit for the wetland determination to be official.

Recently, the decision was made at the national level directing the Farm Service Agency offices to bring back the inventory that was completed 20+ years ago. This is why these dots have reappeared on the FSA aerial photos. What is worse, is that the dots are now labeled “restricted” and no one wants to see that on their privately owned property.

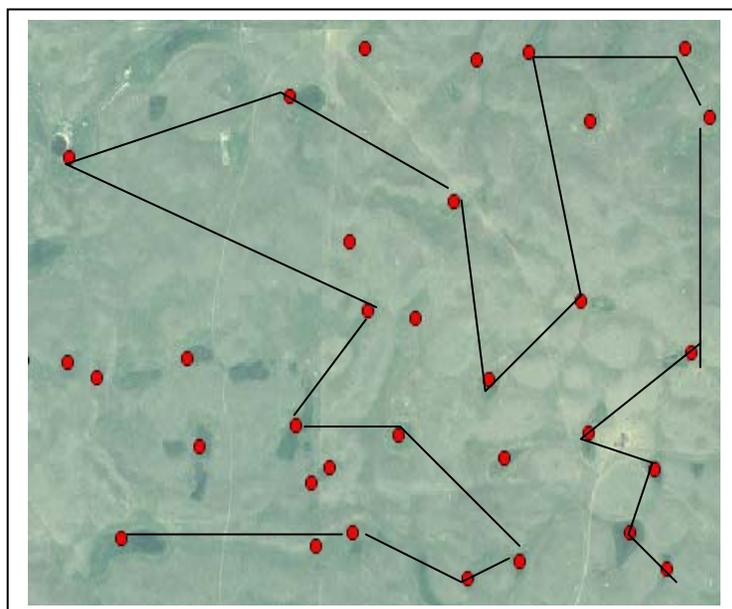
So what does this mean for you? Once again, it goes back to the Food Security Act of 1985. In order to participate in USDA farm programs and be eligible for program benefits, ag producers must be compliant with the regulations of the Food Security Act. Currently policy allows farming of wetlands using normal agronomic practices. This means that you are allowed to farm them as long as you do not manipulate the hydrology by draining or filling the wetland.

As of now, the Shelby NRCS is keeping a list of producers that have reported definite errors in the

wetland inventory on their farm. However, given the relatively non-restrictive nature of current policy and the fact that we do not have the man-power to be able to re-inventory all of the wetlands, redeterminations will not be a priority. Producers will need to contact us if they do intend to alter or somehow change these wetland dot areas, just as a precaution for themselves. This type of activity would elevate the priority and an on-site wetland determination would be needed.

In addition to the Food Security Act, the Army Corps of Engineers also has jurisdiction over navigable wetlands at this point in time. They are not concerned with whether production of a commodity crop is made possible, rather they govern the integrity of the wetland itself. At present their jurisdiction applies to navigable wetlands, meaning any that are connected to waters of the U.S., not necessarily navigable by boat. Small intermittent streams and wetlands associated would be considered navigable.

As always, it is a good idea to stay informed about pending legislation that could impact how wetlands are restricted and how this may impact your farm or ranch. It can be challenging to determine what you can and cannot do with the wetlands and what the repercussions could be. NRCS will try to assist you in answering questions you might have about your wetlands, and ‘connect the dots’ about what it all means. 📍



CHANGES TO PAYMENT ELIGIBILITY, PAYMENT LIMITATION AND AGI FOR CRP PARTICIPANTS

The 2008 Farm Bill made specific changes to payment eligibility, payment limitation, and average AGI requirements for participants in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP):

- Annual payments are limited to \$50,000, both directly and indirectly, to a person or legal entity by direct attribution;
- Permitted entity rules no longer apply;
- The average AGI limitation is now a \$1million average gross nonfarm income limitation.
- The payment eligibility requirements of “actively engaged in farming” and the cash rent tenant rule are no longer applicable for participation in CRP for contracts approved **after** September 30, 2008. ⓘ

LIVESTOCK INDEMNITY PROGRAM (LIP) HAS BEGUN

Signup for LIP began July 13th. If you had livestock losses from storms occurring during calendar year 2008 or 2009, you may be eligible to receive benefits from the LIP program.

To Apply:

- A notice of loss must be filed according to the following table.
- Proof of death of livestock must be provided and may include but is not limited to any or a combination of veterinary records, tax assessor records, private insurance documents.
- Documentation must provide sufficient data that identifies the kind/type weight range of the livestock and the number of livestock.

A third party certification may be accepted only when the participant certifies in writing that no other form of proof of death is available and includes the number of physical location of livestock in inventory at the time the death occurred. Documentation must also be provided to support the number of livestock in the

inventory at the time the deaths occurred. The third party providing the verification must be a reliable source and shall not be a relative associated with the operation or a hired man.

The following table provides the final dates to file a notice of loss and/or application for payment for either 2008 or 2009 livestock losses:

Date of Livestock Death	Final Date to File a Notice of Loss	Final Date to Submit an Application for Payment
Calendar Year 2008	Sept. 13, 2009	Sept. 13, 2009
Jan. 1, 2009 to July 12, 2009	Sept. 13, 2009	Jan. 30, 2010
July 13, 2009 to Dec. 31, 2009	30 days after death is apparent	Jan. 30, 2010

LIP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have incurred livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality on or after Jan. 1, 2008 and before Oct. 1, 2011 due to adverse weather, such as blizzards, disease, extreme cold, extreme heat, floods, and wildfires. The Montana State FSA Committee established the normal mortality rates for each livestock kind/type and weight range. ⓘ

TREASURY IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT BEGINS

Beginning August 3, 2009, any FSA/ or Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) payments made by direct deposit will be transmitted to the Department of Treasury through Kansas City.

The Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 (DCIA) requires that all Federal payments be offset for delinquent Federal debt. All payments will be matched against debt referred to Treasury, including payments made by a Treasury check. Payments to assignees will be subject to the Treasury Offset Program (TOP) offset if the

USDA SERVICE CENTER

Phone: 406-434-5234
FAX: 406-434-2718

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Tim Fenger, Regular Member

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NRCS STAFF

Misty Vermulm (Ext 110)
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**CONSERVATION DISTRICT
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assignee has a delinquent Federal debt in TOP. If the TOP database finds a match for taxpayer identification number and name, the payment will be offset for the delinquent debt. The Treasury Department will notify the payment recipient of any offsets taken for debts due other agencies.

Currently, the description on the payee's bank statement reads, "USDA_FSAKCMOCDSP". After August 3, 2009, the description on the bank statement will read, "FSA TREAS 310" for all payments that are disbursed by Treasury.

If there are questions about a TOP offset, the payee may call the TOP Call Center at 1-800-304-3107 to obtain the contact information for the offsetting agency. The TOP Call Center only has access to provide the name of the offsetting agency and their contact information. The payee will need to call the offsetting agency to determine the origination of the debt. ↑

**WOMEN STEPPING FORWARD FOR
AGRICULTURE SYMPOSIUM**

The 9th Annual Women Stepping Forward for Agriculture Symposium will be held at the Eagles in Lewistown, October 7 & 8.

An exciting agenda has been developed for this year's symposium. A few of the highlights include a panel discussing Carbon Credit Options for Agriculture, Horse Processing Issues, Update on Montana's Brucellosis Status, Thoughts from Trent Loos, Agriculture Policy as we see it and Water Rights/Irrigation. Representatives from six of the USDA agencies will be present to provide a short presentation on new programs and issues production agriculture operators should be aware of.

Pre-registration information should be submitted by September 15, 2009. The cost of registration is \$60.00. A block of rooms has been reserved at the Yogo Inn.

For further information or a registration form, logon to the Montana FSA website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt>, contact any USDA Service Center or by calling Heidi Brewer at 406/232-7905 ext. 122.

The Women Stepping Forward for Agriculture Symposium is sponsored by the State Food and Agriculture Outreach Council and the MT Agri-women; Montana Cattlewomen; MT Farm Bureau Federation Women; and WIFE.

Calendar of Events

- Sept 7 Office Closed-Labor Day
Sept 30 Deadline for CRP Managed Hay/Graze
Oct 7 & 8 Women Stepping Forward
Oct 12 Office Closed-Columbus Day

*** The FSA Toole County Committee meetings are scheduled for the first Thursday of each month beginning at 9:00 a.m. at the FSA Office.**

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (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 202-702-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director; Office of Civil Rights; Room 326-W, Whitten Building; 1499 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, D.C., 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964 (voice or TDD).

Toole County FSA
1125 Oilfield Ave.
Shelby, MT 59474

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“Special accommodations will be made for the physically handicapped, vision or hearing impaired person upon request. If accommodation is required, please contact Bob Hermance, County Executive Director at the above address; call 406-434-5234; or email: robert.hermance@mt.usda.gov