



NEWSLETTER



Message from the
Acting Montana State Executive
Director Dick Deschamps



Spring has arrived and many agricultural producers are busy with young livestock and/or preparing for another productive crop year. At Farm Service Agency (FSA), employees from our 49 county offices across the state are busy assisting farmers and ranchers with several farm program signups and ongoing farm loan programs. I want to briefly go over some of those programs with you and also give an update from the FSA State Office.

- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) General Signup 43 began on March 12 and ends on April 6.
- The 2010 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE) signup began in Nov. 14 and ends on June 1. We are expecting signup for the 2011 crop year to begin sometime this fall/winter.
- Signup is underway for the 2012 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) and 2012 Average Crop Revenue Election Programs (ACRE) and will also end on June 1.
- The final date for producers to apply for Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs) is May 31 for 2011 crop year corn, dry peas, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, safflower seed, chickpeas, soybeans and sunflower seed crops.
- The final date to file the 2012 acreage report for all crops and rangeland is July 16.

As you may be aware, Congress is currently working on the next Farm Bill. Our offices currently administer FSA programs authorized under the 2008 Farm Bill of which disaster programs are only authorized for natural disasters occurring prior to Sept. 30, 2011. These five disaster programs are the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), Livestock Forage Program (LFP), Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP), Tree Assistance Program (TAP) and SURE. I encourage you to follow the farm bill process to see how new legislation may affect your operation. In the meantime, feel free to contact your local county FSA office for more information on any current FSA farm program or farm loan program.

Only a few months have passed since you elected a new county committee member to the local county committees. As you know terms are staggered, and each year we go through the nomination and election process for one of the local administrative areas (LAA) in the county servicing area. On page two of this newsletter, there is a nomination form (FSA-669A) for producers in those areas with an election this year. Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in an FSA program may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee. Individuals may nominate themselves or others as a candidate. Organizations representing minority and women farmers or ranchers, including tribal governments, may nominate candidates. Nomination forms are filed for the county committee of the office that administers a producer's farm records. Nominations open on June 15 and end on Aug. 1. The 2012 election will be held in early November to Dec. 3, 2012. New county committee members will begin serving on Jan. 1, 2013. Please consider becoming involved on the county committee to help have a say in how farm programs are administered in your county.

Over the past three months, Montana FSA has converted to GovDelivery, an electronic delivery option. Producers can now enroll to receive news bulletins, state and county newsletters, state news releases and reminders via email. Customers with emails in the FSA database are automatically being subscribed to MT & their County Newsletter & Updates. If you have been added, you can modify your subscription at www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe or if your email isn't in the FSA system, you can subscribe today. Contact your county office to stop receiving mailed newsletters and if you need assistance signing up for GovDelivery. As we convert to more electronic means of communication we are not forgetting that using the mail is still a very viable way to do business. County Committee ballots and FSA correspondence to individual producers will continue to be mailed, and we will continue to do business in person or through the mail for those producers who desire those methods. As budgets shrink GovDelivery gives us another method to stay connected with you.

You really don't need to travel far in our state to see the prominence of agriculture on the landscape. Farmers and ranchers have a great impact on the economy of Montana, as well as a significant role in helping to feed the world. The Farm Service Agency is committed to being a viable partner with production agriculture, helping to insure stability and viability for your farms and ranches. Please feel free to contact your local office directly or me, personally, if you have suggestions for improving our service to you. My hope for you is a productive crop, good prices and a safe spring/summer season.

Montana Farm Service Agency State E-Newsletter

April 2012

Montana State FSA Committee:

Steve Carney, *Chair*
Floyd Dahlman, *Member*
Kelly Flaherty-Settle, *Member*
Hans McPherson, *Member*
Patricia Quisno, *Member*

Acting State Executive Director Dick Deschamps

P.O. Box 670
Bozeman, MT 59771
406-587-6872 phone
406-587-6887 fax

Montana FSA Web site:

www.fsa.usda.gov/mt

Hours:

Monday - Friday
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Upcoming 2012 State Committee Meetings:

April 4-5, July 9-10 and Oct. 10-11 in the Montana State Office located at 10 East Babcock on the 5th Floor of the Federal Building in Bozeman.

FSA State Office Management:

Dick Deschamps,
Chief Administrative Officer
Dave Pitts,
Farm Loan Program Chief
Amy Webbink,
Price Support/Conservation Chief
Program Specialist
Shelly Rolando, *Disaster and*
Compliance Program Chief
Jennifer Perez Cole, *Public Affairs*
Specialist. Outreach Coordinator,
State Civil Rights Coordinator
Cindy Coad,
Program/Management Analyst

Reasonable Accommodations:

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, contact the County Executive Director directly or by phone at the county FSA Office or the Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

Nomination Form for County FSA Committee Election: Below is a nomination form for the 2012 County Committee Election that will be held in early November to Dec. 3, 2012. Persons nominated should actively participate in the operation of a farm or ranch and be well qualified for committee work. This year, a producer is eligible to be a County FSA committee member if the producer resides in the Local Administrative Area (LAA) up for election. Duties of county committee members include administering farm program activities conducted by the County FSA Office, informing farmers of the purpose and provisions of the FSA programs, keeping the State FSA Committee informed of LAA conditions, monitoring changes in farm programs, participating in county meetings as necessary and performing other duties as assigned by the State FSA Committee. This is a non-salary public service position. A small stipend is provided to offset expenses. Federal regulations may prohibit County FSA Committee members from holding certain positions in some farm, commodity, and political organizations if such positions pose a conflict of interest with FSA duties. Completed and signed form(s) must be delivered to the FSA County Office or postmarked no later than **Aug. 1**. If you have any questions about eligibility or the election process, please call or visit the county office.

FSA-669A
(02-22-12)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Farm Service Agency

NOMINATION FORM FOR COUNTY FSA COMMITTEE ELECTION

| | | | |
|--|----------|--|----------|
| 1. NAME OF NOMINEE (Type or Print Nominee's Full Name) | | TO BE COMPLETED BY COUNTY FSA OFFICE | |
| 2. ADDRESS OF NOMINEE | | 4. INITIALS OF EMPLOYEE RECEIVING FORM AND DATE RECEIVED | |
| 3. NOMINEE'S CERTIFICATION: <i>I hereby agree to have my name placed on the ballot, that I will serve if elected, and if there is a conflict of interest, I will resign such position.</i> | | 5. COUNTY | |
| | | 6. LAA | 7. STATE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I DO want to witness the settling of tied votes with another nominee. <input type="checkbox"/> I DO NOT want to witness the settling of tied votes with another nominee. | | 8. NOMINATOR'S CERTIFICATION: <i>If this nomination is by other than self, the following eligible voter or representative of a community based organization hereby nominates the afore-named person to be a candidate in the next County FSA Committee election for the county.</i> | |
| 3A. SIGNATURE OF NOMINEE | 3B. DATE | 8A. SIGNATURE OF NOMINATOR | 8B. DATE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Check here if nominee is a write-in candidate. | | (If the individual is self nominating, no signature is required). | |

9. TO BE COMPLETED BY NOMINEE

VOLUNTARY INFORMATION FOR MONITORING PURPOSES: The following information is requested by the Federal Government in order to monitor FSA's compliance with federal laws prohibiting discrimination against program participants on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, marital status, handicapped condition, or age. You are not required to furnish this information, but are encouraged to do so. This information will not be used in evaluating your nomination or to discriminate against you in any way.

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| ETHNICITY | RACE (Choose as many boxes as applicable) | GENDER |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Not Hispanic or Latino | <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska Native <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African-American <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female |

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THIS FORM

Complete the form as follows:

- ITEM 1** Type or Print the nominee's full name. The nominee must be:
 - A. Eligible to vote in the designated County FSA Committee election.
 - B. Eligible to hold the office of County FSA Committee member.
 - C. Willing to serve if elected.
- ITEM 2** Enter the nominee's current address.
- ITEM 3** The nominee must check one of the boxes to indicate a preference regarding the settling of tied votes.
- ITEMS 3A & 3B** The nominee must sign and date.
- ITEMS 8A & 8B** The nominator must sign and date. (If the individual is self nominating, no signature is required.)
- ITEM 9** Completing this item is voluntary.

ALL FORMS MUST BE RECEIVED IN THE COUNTY OFFICE OR POSTMARKED BY AUGUST 1, 2012.

NOTE: The following statement is made in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USC 552a - as amended). The authority for requesting the information identified on this form is the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Pub. L. 110-246). The information will be used to obtain nominees for election to the County FSA Committee. The information collected on this form may be disclosed to other Federal, State, Local government agencies, Tribal agencies, and nongovernmental entities that have been authorized access to the information by statute or regulation and/or as described in applicable Routine Uses identified in the System of Records Notice for County Personnel Records, USDA/FSA-6. Providing the requested information is voluntary. However, failure to furnish the requested information will result in a determination of ineligibility for nomination for election to the County FSA Committee.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0560-0229. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 10 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The provisions of appropriate criminal and civil fraud, privacy, and other statutes may be applicable to the information provided. **RETURN THIS COMPLETED FORM TO YOUR COUNTY FSA OFFICE.**

Importance of Accurate & Timely Filed Acreage Reports

Filing an accurate and timely acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of program benefits. To be considered timely filed, FSA-578 certification must be filed for all farms by **July 16, 2012**. In addition, acreage reports for prevented planted acreage are required to be submitted no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date for the applicable crop and failed acreage shall be filed before the disposition of the crop. Note: a CCC-576 "Notice of Loss" must be filed in conjunction with the FSA-578 for prevented planted and failed acreage requests. A CCC-576 is available at your local FSA office. FSA-578's may be certified by the farm operator, farm owner, person authorized by power of attorney, or tenants and share-croppers. These producers can only certify to crops that they have an interest or share. It may be possible that more than one signature is required on a FSA-578.

The following table identifies the acreage reporting requirements per program, according to the 2008 Farm Bill:

| Benefit | Acreage Reporting Requirement | Reason for Requirement |
|--------------|--|--|
| SURE | All crops, in all counties. Note: This includes crops on cropland and/or noncropland, including native or improved grass that will be hayed or grazed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authorized by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008. Needed to establish eligibility of the crop and producer for SURE benefits. |
| ACRE Program | All cropland on the farm. Note: Emphasis must be placed on accurate reporting of irrigated status and intended use of a crop. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authorized by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008. Needed to establish eligibility of the crop and producer for ACRE benefits. |
| LFP | Pastureland or grazing land acreage for which LFP benefits may be requested. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authorized by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008. Needed to establish eligibility of the crop and producer for LFP benefits. |

Contact FSA prior to ANY Burning on CRP land

Producers must contact the local FSA office to complete the required paperwork and receive FSA approval before undertaking any early land preparation activities on CRP. Call the county office for prior authorization or if you have any questions to avoid penalties and/or cancellation of CRP contracts.

Farm Divisions/Combinations Must Be Requested By August 1

If you have sold, purchased or leased a farm or part of a farm, please notify this office immediately. If you need to request a farm division or a farm combination for 2012, the deadline to submit the request is Aug. 1, 2012 for those farms participating in DCP/ACRE. If requests are not filed timely, it may be difficult to complete 2012 contracts with all required signatures for the farm. Requests received after Aug. 1, 2012, will be processed for 2013.

New Continuous CRP Initiative

FSA has announced a new conservation initiative to protect up to 750,000 acres of the nation's most highly erodible croplands by enabling them to plant wildlife-friendly, long-term cover. This initiative will assist producers in targeting their most highly erodible cropland with an erodibility index of 20 or greater. Producers can enroll land on a continuous basis beginning this summer. With the use of soil survey and geographic information system data, local FSA staff can quickly determine a producer's eligibility for the initiative. Producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office or visit FSA's website at www.fsa.usda.gov/crp for additional CRP information.

| Benefit | Acreage Reporting Requirement | Reason for Requirement |
|--|---|--|
| MAL's and LDP's | All cropland on the farm. Note: Farms that have zero cropland will have the flag set to "Y" in the cropland comparison file. No producer or County Office action will be necessary. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authorized by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008. Needed to determine reasonableness of claimed production. |
| Direct and counter-cyclical payments under DCP | All cropland on the farm. Note: Farms that have zero cropland will have the flag set to "Y" in the cropland comparison file. No producer or County Office action will be necessary. | |
| CRP annual rental payment | CRP acreage according to CRP-1 Appendix. | Needed to determine that the producer has maintained CRP acreage. |
| NAP | Crop acreage for which NAP benefits may be requested. | Needed to establish eligibility of the crop and producer for NAP benefits. |

Measurement Service is available from FSA offices and may be beneficial for producers to assist in accurately reporting crop acreage or to determine the quantity of farm-stored commodities according to price support procedure. Contact the county office for details and/or schedule an appointment.



Dairy Payments Triggered in Milk Income Loss Contract Program

The February 2012 Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) payment rate is \$0.3895043 per hundredweight. This is the first time there has been a payment for MILC since April 2010. Dairy producers must meet program requirements to maintain program eligibility. (MILC) participants must notify their local FSA office of any operation changes, such as a change in producer, shares, address or bank routing number. Dairy producers applying for MILC payment must meet adjusted gross income (AGI) requirements by completing, "CCC-931 - AGI Certification and Consent to Disclosure of Tax Information." For MILC enrollment, dairy producers must fill out, "CCC-580 - Milk Income Loss Contract" and select a start-month for payments. Current dairies in MILC can make changes to their start-month with certain restrictions. Any start-month changes must be made on or before the 14th of the month before the selected MILC production start-month. The change must also be made before requesting payment and before the original MILC production start-month has passed. Changes to the dairy operation start-month must be designated on "CCC-580M - Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) Modification." For questions, contact the county office.



FSA: Upcoming Important Dates to Remember:

- April 6: Last day to submit bids in CRP General Sign-Up 43
- May 31: Final date to apply for loans/LDPs for 2011 crop year corn, dry peas, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, rice, safflower seed, chickpeas, soybeans and sunflower seed.
- May 14: CRP Managed Spring Grazing Period Ends
- May 28 - USDA Offices closed in observance of Memorial Day federal holiday
- June 1: 2012 DCP & ACRE Signup Deadline
- June 1: SURE Sign-up Deadline for 2010 Crop Year
- June 15: County Committee Nomination Period Begins
- July 4: USDA Offices closed in observance of Independence Day federal holiday
- July 16: Final date to file 2012 Acreage Report and 2011 NAP Production Report and 2011 NAP Application for Payment
- July 16: CRP Managed Summer/Fall Grazing Period Begins
- Aug. 1: Last day to file County Committee nomination forms
- Sept. 13: CRP Managed Summer/Fall Grazing Period Ends
- Nov. 5: County Committee Election Ballots Mailed to Eligible Voters
- Dec. 3: Last day to return voted County Committee ballots to FSA county office
- Jan. 1: New County Committee Members and Alternates take office.

Selected Interest Rates-April 1, 2012

| Loan Type | Current Rate (%) |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| Farm Operating | 1.25 |
| Farm Ownership | 3.375 |
| Farm Ownership – Down Payment | 1.50 |
| Emergency – Actual Loss | 3.75 |
| Farm Storage Facility Loan - 7 year | 1.5 |
| Farm Storage Facility Loan -10 year | 2.125 |
| Farm Storage Facility Loan -12 year | 2.375 |
| Commodity Loans | 1.125 |

Need Hay?

Visit the Montana Department
of Agriculture's Hay Hotline:
www.services.agr.mt.gov/Hay
[List](#)

FSA Cooperation with RMA

The Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000 requires the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Risk Management Agency (RMA) to work together to improve program compliance and integrity of the Federal Crop Insurance Program. As a result of the passage of the 2000 Act, RMA and FSA are required to coordinate a plan to identify, address and reconcile discrepancies of all relevant producer-derived information, and to coordinate a monitoring program to include fact finding relative to allegations of program fraud, waste, and abuse. FSA will assist RMA and insurance providers in monitoring conditions throughout the growing season and conduct growing season inspections. All suspected cases of fraud, waste, and abuse concerning the Federal Crop Insurance Program will be referred to RMA. FSA will also assist RMA with auditing claims. Producers may also report suspected cases of fraud, waste, and abuse to their local FSA County Office, the RMA Office or OIG.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement/Complaint Process:

"The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its program and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (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) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication and Compliance, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender."