



# NEWSLETTER



**DECEMBER 2010**

## **Benton County FSA**

415 Wine Country Rd  
Prosser, WA 99336  
Phone: 509-786-2313 Ext: 2  
Fax: 509-786-1175

## **Office Hours**

Monday – Friday  
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

## **County Committee**

David Roseberry, Chair  
Jeff Freepons, Vice-Chair  
Carl Anderson, Member  
Teresa Engbretson, Advisor

## **Office Staff**

Dennis Simmelink, CED  
dennis.simmelink@wa.usda.gov  
Bonnie Anderson, PT  
Teresa Johnson, PT  
Hollie Tuttle, PT

## **Farm Loan Staff**

Serving Benton and Franklin  
Counties:  
Libby Anderson, FLM  
509-754-2463  
Joyce Nevins-Ginsberg, FLO  
Beth Farias, FLT  
509-545-8543

## **Next COC Meetings**

December 13, 2010  
Organizational Meeting:  
January 12, 2011

COC meetings are normally held on Wednesday of the second full week of the month @ 9:00 (NO meetings are held during the month of July.)

## **Get Your Payments Timely & Accurately**

Changes to your Bank Account or has your Bank changed names? If so, don't forget to update your Direct Deposit Form(s) for timely payments. Also, please keep us informed of any changes to your address or operation.

## **FSA WEB Sites**

National: www.fsa.usda.gov  
State: www.fsa.usda.gov/wa

## **Reasonable Accommodations**

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing loss. If accommodations are required, please contact Dennis Simmelink at (509) 786-2313.



## **COC ELECTIONS – PLEASE VOTE**

Producers who want to have a direct impact on the makeup of the FSA Benton County Committee have until **December 6** to do so.

This year LAA #1, which encompasses the northern portion of the county and includes all acreage lying north of Highway 22 and west of Highway 225 at the juncture of Benton City, is up for election. Jeff Freepons currently holds this position. The following have been nominated and agree to serve if elected to the County Committee:

- Jeff Freepons – apples, grapes
- Martin Pedroza – cherries

Ballots were mailed on November 5, and must be returned to the FSA office or post-marked by December 6. Producers may be eligible to vote based on participation or cooperation in any FSA or NRCS program. Ballots will be counted at the county office on December 13, 2010 at 10:30 am, and is open to the public.

Newly elected committee members begin their term January 1, 2011. For more information on requirements or to request a ballot, please feel free to contact this office.

## **PAPER CHECK CONVERSION (PPC) – OVER THE COUNTER (OTC)**

Over the next year, FSA/CCC is moving toward an electronic method for processing producers' checks. This will allow FSA/CCC to process collections faster. When producers present checks, either in person or through the mail, the checks will be converted into an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). The funds will be debited from the producer's account, usually within 24 hours of receipt. Checks given in person will then be voided and returned to the producer. Mailed checks will be voided and held for up to 14 days, then shredded if not picked up by the producer.

Please see the U.S. Department of Treasury legal notices posted in the Service Center or visit the following U.S. Department of Treasury Internet site for detailed information:

<https://www.pccotc.gov/pccotc/pcc/usingpcc/Legal%20Notices/legalnotices.htm>

## **DCP/ACRE SIGNUP UNDERWAY FOR 2011**

Applications are now being accepted for the Direct & Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) and the Average Crop Revenue Election Program (ACRE) for 2011. To be eligible for program payments and benefits, producers must file a contract each year. Producers on farms that elected the ACRE program in 2009 or 2010 remain in ACRE through 2012; however, producers must also file a contract each year. Producers who were in DCP last year may remain in DCP or elect the ACRE program for 2011. Once ACRE is elected, the farm remains in ACRE through 2012.

DCP direct payment rates remain unchanged from last year: \$.52/bu wheat, \$.24/bu barley. ACRE direct payments are reduced by 20%. Advance direct payments are available under either program at 22% of the total direct payment rate for the year. Payments are earned on 83.3% of the farm's established base acreage, times the farm's established yield, times the producer's share. Producers are free to plant any crop on their base acreage with the exception of fruits & vegetables and wild rice. Please call in advance for an appointment to sign up for DCP or ACRE.

## **CONSERVATION PLANNING – NEW CRP GENERAL SIGNUP #39**

Benton County had 73 offers submitted, and accepted for enrollment, during signup #39 for a total of 12,257.4 acres. Producers with accepted offers for CRP signed an interim conservation plan prior to contract approval. A final conservation plan is now required and will be developed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The conservation plan will identify actions needed to establish the required cover on the CRP acreage. The plans will vary depending on whether the producer offered old CRP with cover that will not be enhanced, old CRP that must be replanted to a new cover, or new cropland that must be planted to an approved cover.

Each conservation plan will be unique depending on the individual situation. The plans will also address wildlife watering facilities (guzzlers) and pollinator habitat plots if applicable. **Conservation plans must be completed and approved by December 31, 2010.** Producers with accepted offers should contact the local NRCS office as soon as possible to begin the conservation planning process so that all required approvals may be obtained prior to the deadline.

Producers who do not agree to the provisions in the final conservation plan may withdraw their contract without the assessment of liquidated damages.

### **PAYMENT UPDATE**

Many of the problems that our offices experienced last year with issuing payments have been corrected and most CRP, DCP-Direct and ACRE-Direct payments have been issued for 2010. In addition, with a few exceptions, we have completed the 2009 ACRE-ACRE payment cycle. There are a few pending computer problems to resolve, but over 99% of payments have been issued. Producers are reminded that payment statements will be received in the mail from our Kansas City Office and will likely reach your mailbox one to two weeks after the payment has been direct deposited into your account. Please feel free to contact us if you have not yet received an expected payment and we will research the situation for you.

### **RECONSTITUTIONS BY LANDOWNER DESIGNATION**

When completing reconstitutions of farms under landowner designation, producers may elect to divide bases in a manner agreed to by the parent farm owner(s) and the purchaser when; part of the land is sold or ownership is transferred, an entire farm is sold to 2 or more persons, part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred, or a tract is sold or ownership is transferred to 2 or more persons. This method may be particularly appropriate when a part of the farm will no longer be used for farming practices where bases would normally be utilized, such as conversion of part of a base farm to permanent orchard as an example.

Using landowner designation requires agreement of all parties, including both seller and buyer or transferees, by signing of FSA-155 or through completion of a memorandum of understanding with sales agreement which specifies how bases will be divided. When completing farm reconstitutions, feel free to inquire as to whether this method of base division may be appropriate in your situation. We will be glad to assist you with the process as requested.

### **CONSERVATION LOAN PROGRAM**

A new Conservation Loan (CL) program has been launched that will provide farm owners and farm-related business operator's access to credit to implement conservation techniques that will conserve natural resources.

CL funds can be used to implement conservation practices approved by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), such as the installation of conservation structures; establishment of forest cover; installation of water conservation measures; establishment or improvement of permanent pastures; implementation of manure management; and the adaptation of other emerging or existing conservation practices, techniques or technologies. Funds can also be used in conjunction with enhancement practices called for under approved CRP contracts.

Direct CLs can be obtained through local Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices with loan limits up to \$300,000. Guaranteed CLs up to \$1,112,000 are available from lenders working with FSA.

For more information on the Conservation Loan program, contact a local FSA office or visit the FSA website at:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov>

### **SIGNATURE REQUIREMENTS**

County offices must verify that a signature authority is on file in the county office before accepting a signature on any program or related documents on behalf of another. When signing in a representative capacity for a husband or wife, trust, estate, partnership, corporation, or other entity, an indicator such as "by" or "for" should precede the signature, followed by authorization, such as "trustee" or "POA". Please remember that all signatures must be **dated**.

Spouses may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest unless written notification denying a spouse this authority has been provided to the county office. A spouse may not, however, sign a Power of Attorney on behalf of the spouse, nor may they sign on behalf of the other as an authorized signatory for entities. Spouses must also have Powers of Attorneys on file to sign for claim settlements such as promissory notes.

### **PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT INFORMATION WEB PAGE**

The FSA Financial Services Website allows producers to generate reports that show both current and historical financial information. Registered producers may view summary and detail information about specific payments, collections, outstanding debt (excluding loans) and form CCC-1099-G (amounts reported to the IRS). In order to access the Financial Services Website, you must first sign up for an e-Authentication Level 2 Account at the following website:

<http://www/eauth.usda.gov>

Once you have completed the process in establishing your Level 2 account, you will be able to access the Financial Services Website at the following website:

<http://www.fsa.gov/fmi>

Please feel free to contact us if you would like additional information concerning these program access options.