

September 2013



Columbia/Walla Walla County FSA Updates

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Columbia County Office **Marketing Assistance Loans**

202 South 2nd Street
Dayton, WA 99328

Ph: 509-382-2421
Fax: 855-843-6123

Walla Walla County Office

325 N 13th Ave
Walla Walla, WA 99362

Ph: 509-522-6347
Fax: 855-843-6123

County Executive Director:
Travis Martin

Program Technicians:
Christy Bell
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Norma Colunga
Lee Walters

Farm Loan Manager:
Houston Bruck

Marketing Assistance loans; also referred to as commodity or price support loans, are available for producers who have eligible warehouse and/or farm stored commodities. These loans can provide temporary cash flow for operating expenses or paying down bank notes. Current interest rates are favorable, with any loans disbursed in September at 1.125% interest.

Loans will mature no later than the last day of the ninth month following the month the loan was disbursed in. Loans can also be paid off prior to maturity. Lien searches and UCC filings will need to be completed prior to loan disbursement.

Producers may self certify to the quantity on farm stored loans or pay a measurement service fee for office personnel to physically measure the quantity. Certified farm loans are subject to later spot-checks. Producers who take out farm stored loans are responsible for maintaining the quality of the crop through the term of the loan. Producers with loans must receive prior authorization from the county office prior to feeding, selling, or hauling of the stored commodity. Unauthorized dispositions carry severe penalties. Warehouse loans will be secured with a warehouse receipt.

Eligible commodities for loan include wheat, barley, corn, oats, honey, dry peas and other seed crops. Loan rates for Columbia County are \$2.68/bu for white wheat, \$3.76/bu. for hard red spring, \$3.39/bu. for hard red winter, \$82.47/ton (\$2.31/bu.) for corn, and \$2.15/bu for barley. Loan rates for Walla Walla County are \$2.68/bu for white wheat, \$3.76/bu. for hard red spring, \$3.40/bu. for hard red winter, \$82.47/ton (\$2.31/bu.) for corn, and \$2.18/bu for barley. Please contact the County Office for more commodity

Ph: 509-924-7350

loan details.

Next County Committee Meeting:

October 30 2013 at 8:30 AM
Location: Walla Walla Service Center

Continue To Report Crop Losses

Prompt weather-related disaster reporting is crucial for FSA to determine the need for disaster declarations. If you experienced crop damage or other agriculture losses due to recent weather events, contact this FSA office and if applicable, your crop insurance agent. Disaster declarations trigger availability of emergency loans and in some instances, additional disaster assistance programs. Timely reporting to FSA and your insurance agent is also important for Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance (NAP) or crop insurance payments.

NAP Application Sales Closing Dates for 2014 Crops

Many of the fall NAP sales closing dates begin with this month, (while a few have passed— see below). Form CCC-471 Application for Coverage must be completed, along with payment of the NAP fee, and provided to your local FSA county office. The service fee is \$250 per crop per county or \$750 per producer per county. The fee cannot exceed a total of \$1875 per producer with farming interest in multiple counties. Limited resource producers may request a waiver of service fees. To qualify, a producer must be a landowner, tenant or sharecropper who shares in the risk of producing an eligible crop. The following are the sales closing dates for Columbia/Walla Walla Counties:

Sales closed for 2014:

- 8/31/2013 – Canola; carrots (for seed, fresh or processing); Christmas trees; floriculture; mushrooms; onions (for seed, fresh or processing); rapeseed; and any other fall planted crops not mentioned in other closing dates. For future year coverage, August 31 will likely continue to be the sales closing date for these fall planted crops and crop types.

Sales open for 2014:

- 9/30/2013 – Mint; perennial grazing, forage, mixed forage, and forage seed crops.
- 11/20/2013 – Perennial crops not listed in the 9/30 category; asparagus; berries; grapes; honey; hops; tree fruits and nuts.
- 3/15/2014 – Beets (for seed or fresh); buckwheat; camellia; mustard; radish (for seed or fresh); small grain forages (wheat, barley, oats, peas); and any other spring planted crops not mentioned in other closing dates.

NAP coverage should be purchased at least 30 days before the crop is planted, but no later than the application closing date. NAP coverage cannot be offered on any crop for which Federal Crop Insurance is available in the county.

FSA Introduces New Microloan Program

FSA is offering more flexible access to credit through the new microloan program. The program is an attractive loan alternative for smaller farming operations like specialty crop producers and operators of community supported agriculture (CSA).

Microloans can be used for all approved operating expenses as authorized by the FSA Operating Loan Program,

including but not limited to:

- Initial start-up expenses;
- Annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents;
- Marketing and distribution expenses;
- Purchase of livestock, equipment, and other materials essential to farm operations;
- Minor farm improvements such as wells and coolers.
- Hoop houses to extend the growing season.

The application process for microloans will be simpler, requiring less paperwork to fill out. Requirements for managerial experience and loan security have been modified to accommodate smaller farm operations, beginning farmers and those with no farm management experience. Applicants will need to have some farm experience; however, FSA will consider an applicant's small business experience as well as any experience with a self-guided apprenticeship as a means to meet the farm management requirement.

Eligible applicants may obtain a microloan for up to \$35,000. The repayment term may vary and will not exceed seven years. Annual operating loans are repaid within 12 months or when the agricultural commodities produced are sold. Interest rates are based on the regular OL rates that are in effect at the time of the microloan approval or microloan closing, whichever is less. Currently the rate is 1.25%. Please contact Houston Bruck or Joyce Nevins-Ginsberg (509-545-8543) for more information.

2014 Acreage Reporting Deadlines

In 2013 Farm Service Agency and the Risk Management Agency established joint acreage reporting dates; the changes became effective the 2013 reporting year. The dates for Washington State for 2014 are as follows.

- All fall planted wheat/small grains, mint, fall planted canola, fall planted onions, and alfalfa seed - 12/15/2013
- Perennial fruits and grapes - 1/15/2014
- Spring planted crops, CRP, perennial forages* - 7/15/2014
- Buckwheat -8/15/2014

*perennial forage crops covered under a Noninsured Assistance Program (NAP) policy are required to be reported not later than 15 days after the beginning of harvest of the crop; for range policies within 15 days of the beginning of the NAP grazing season; for hayed crops, within 15 days of first cutting, as established by the County Committee.

Acreage reports accepted after the date(s) specified will be considered late filed, and subject to late filing provisions including a late filing fee. Typical late filing fee is \$46 per farm. Also all late filed acreage reports must have an onsite inspection completed prior to harvest.

All producers with winter wheat or other crops with a 12/15 reporting deadline are encouraged to contact our office to request an appointment, not later than December 15, 2012. We will prioritize those with winter endorsement policies (required by 12/15 to your agent as well), and will create a schedule for remaining producers contacting us by the deadline, to be considered timely filed.

September Agricultural Survey and County Agricultural Production Survey

The September Agricultural Survey and County Agricultural Production Survey (CAPS) conducted by the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) are designed to obtain crucial information that is important for producers, suppliers, bankers, and grain elevator operators. These surveys ask producers to

provide information on their planted acres, harvested acres, yields, total levels of production for specific commodities, and the quantities of grains and oilseeds stored on-farm. The results of these surveys will give detailed county level data on small grain production in the Pacific Northwest and the United States for 2013.

Starting August 30th and ending on September 16th, NASS will sample small grain producers to collect data from all states except Hawaii. A producer may respond online, by mail, or by fax. Responding online is the most timely, cost-effective option. The cover letter includes instructions for this easy option. Producers who respond by mail or fax will fill out the survey questionnaire and return it in the envelope provided or via fax.

Producers benefit from completing this survey. They will have access to the same data as grain elevator operators, suppliers, bankers, and all others with whom you do business. This levels the playing field as each group makes crucial year-end business decisions. The data obtained by the September Agricultural Survey is used by the USDA for important reasons. USDA agencies evaluate and administer vital farm commodity, credit, conservation, disaster, insurance and loan programs based on this information.

NASS understands producers are busy this time of year, but have been tasked to collect the data from a sample of small grain producers. Please respond to make sure this important data is as accurate as possible.

For additional information please contact NASS Northwest Regional Director Chris Mertz at (800) 435-5883.

New Fax Numbers

Columbia/Walla Walla counties will be converting to a new fax system. With this new system we will be utilizing one fax number for the south east area of Washington. The new number is 1-855-843-6123. As of November 1, 2013 the old fax numbers, previously used by the county offices, will be disconnected or not utilized by FSA. Please begin using the new numbers.

It is also advised that when you send a fax to the county office that you first notify the county office of the fax transmission. Also please utilize a cover sheet and identify to whom you are sending the fax. This will eliminate any confusion when the incoming faxes are distributed to the correct county office. Lastly, FSA is consistently increasing the use of email to communicate with producers, if you change your email or have another email that you wish the offices use, please let us know.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).