



NEWSLETTER



May/April 2011

Whatcom County FSA

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Office Hours

Monday – Friday
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

County Committee

Debbie Smit, Chair
Dan Noteboom, V-Chair
Teresa Sygitowicz, Member
Satpaul Neger, Advisor

Office Staff

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National USDA Website

<http://www.usda.gov>

National FSA Website

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

State FSA Website

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

Next COC Meeting

April 20

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sign up deadlines

DCP/Acre – June 1

Acreage Reporting – June 30

SURE – July 29



2010 Committee Election Results

Thank you to all the producers that took time to return ballots! Election results for Local Administrative Area (LAA) 3 is as follows: Teresa Sygitowicz will serve as the regular COC member; Matthew Eldridge is first alternate; Ralph Minaker will serve as second alternate.

Teresa Sygitowicz fills the position vacated by Ed Strachila, who has served on COC for 12 years. Ed will be greatly missed for all the knowledge, support, and invaluable guidance he has provided us through the years.

The FSA county committee is the most direct link between USDA farm programs and local growers. The county committee system helps shape nation-wide programs into programs that work at the local level by making decisions related to commodity price support loans and payments, establishing allotments, yields and marketing quotas for some crops. FSA committees also make eligibility determinations for conservation programs, as well as disaster assistance.

Disaster Reporting is Key

Prompt weather related disaster reporting is crucial for FSA to determine the need of disaster declarations, and ultimately provide producer assistance and help mitigate the damage. Disaster designations trigger availability of low-interest loans and direct payments under the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE) program for farmers and ranchers in the county. It is important for producers to know that crop insurance or NAP coverage can be the first step of recovery against natural disasters and that they are required for SURE eligibility.

Damage reports aren't just limited to crops. They can include damage to structures, eroded farmland or livestock mortality. Helpful documentation includes the specific location of farm damage, date and time of the disaster event, the type of damage (hail, wind, etc), what was affected and the estimated percent of loss. Photographic evidence of significant damage will also be helpful as both FSA and insurance agents use it in support of future program applications and cumulative damage reports.

Producers who purchased **Noninsured Assistance Program (NAP)** coverage are required to report weather related crop damage. **Notice of Loss must be filed by the EARLIER of the following:**

*15 calendar days after the damaging weather or disaster occurrence or date damage to the specific crop acreage is apparent to the producer for low yield claims

*15 calendar days after the normal harvest date.

Additionally, if the intention is to not harvest the crop, the County FSA office must be contacted so that a loss adjuster can verify the crop damage prior to its abandonment or destruction. Failure to meet these requirements can compromise NAP coverage, or make claims ineligible for assistance. The loss must be reported on FSA's CCC-576 Notice of Loss form.

SURE Signup Begins

The SURE **sign-up period for the 2009** county crop losses, began January 10, 2011 and **ends July 29, 2011**. The SURE program provides benefits for farm losses due to natural disasters. A farmer or rancher is eligible for the program when a disaster designation has been made for their county or when actual production is less than half of the normal established production yield. Producers who suffer eligible losses must have crop insurance or a non-insured crop disaster assistance program policy (NAP) for all crops of economic significance.

Direct & Counter-Cyclical & Average Crop Revenue Election Program Sign Up

It's time once again for enrollment in the DCP or ACRE program. **Deadline for enrollment is June 1, 2011.** DCP direct payment rates remain unchanged from last year: **\$.52/bu wheat, \$.28/corn, \$.24/bu barley, and \$.024/oats.** Advance payments are available 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 can **plant any crop** on their base acreage **with the exception of fruits & vegetables (including seed crops) and wild rice.**

The ACRE Program provides **revenue protection against low market prices** or low state and farm yields. As in DCP, a farm must have base acres of a covered commodity in order to be enrolled in ACRE. Briefly, ACRE "trades" the counter-cyclical portion of your DCP payments, 20% of your direct payments, and a 30% reduction in marketing

assistance loan rates on the enrolled farm in exchange for potential ACRE payments that are based on your current year's actual plantings and 12-month national average market prices. In general, ACRE payments for a crop are triggered when actual state prices and/or yields are below normal and the individual farm's actual yields and national prices are also below normal.

Farm Divisions and Reconstitutions

On DCP/ACRE farms, any land divisions or additions on your farm impacts your acreage bases. For program purposes, FSA adheres to a landowner designation of dividing bases in the manner agreed to by the parent farm owner and purchaser or transferee. This method of dividing the bases may be used when any part of a farm or tract is sold or ownership is transferred, an entire tract or farm is sold to two or more persons, or farm or tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons. The land sold or transferred must have been owned for at least three years unless the County Committee approves a waiver of this requirement.

Farm Storage Facility Loans

Producers interested in additional grain, hay or certain cold storage structures are reminded of the availability of the Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFL) to construct these facilities. Loan terms can be up to \$500,000 on 7 - 12 year repayment terms. FSFL funding has been appropriated and is available for 2011 FY applications. For additional program details, please call our office.

FSA Farm Loan Program-Lender of First Opportunity

FSA offers direct operating and farm ownership loan programs, as well as administering a guaranteed loan portfolio. 4H and FFA project youth loans are available to applicants with ages between 10 – 20 years old. Direct loan funding is limited to \$300,000 and guaranteed funding is \$1,119,000. Call the office for more details.

Reminders

IRS Forms – Every individual or entity who was required to file form CCC-926, Average Adjusted Gross Income Statement and who has or will have received program payments in 2009, 2010, and 2011 must file the applicable IRS consent forms authorizing the review of income for program integrity. Two consent forms, one for individuals (CCC-927) and one for legal entities (CCC-928) will be used. Members of entities need to complete as individuals along with their entity. The forms must be mailed to the IRS within 120 days of signing the form. FSA cannot accept the consent forms. These forms can be obtained at the local FSA office or online at <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov>.

Acreage Reporting – If you participate in FSA programs remember the deadline to report this year's crops is June 30, 2011. Appointment cards will be mailed out to those who filed last year.

Notice to Hispanic or Women Farmers and Ranchers: Compensation for Claims Discrimination

If you believe that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) improperly denied farm loan benefits to you between 1981 and 2000 because you are Hispanic, or because you are female, you may be eligible to apply for compensation. You may be eligible if:

1. you sought a farm loan or farm-loan servicing from USDA during that period; and
2. the loan was denied, provided late, approved for a lesser amount than requested, approved with restrictive conditions, or USDA failed to provide an appropriate loan service; and
3. you believe these actions occurred because you are Hispanic or female.

If you want to register your name to receive a claims package, you can call the Farmer and Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429 or access the following website: www.farmerclaims.gov.

In 2011, a Claims Administrator will begin mailing claims packages to those who have requested one through the Call Center or website. The claims package will have detailed information about the eligibility and claims process. In order to participate, you must submit a claim to the Claims Administrator by the end of the claims period.

If you are currently represented by counsel regarding allegations of discrimination against USDA or in a lawsuit claiming discrimination by USDA, you should contact your counsel regarding this claims process. USDA Cannot Provide Legal Advice to You. You are not required to hire an attorney to file a claim, but you may contact a lawyer or other legal services provider in your community for additional guidance.