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County Committee Members

Keven Bradley - Chairman
Billiette Brooks - Vice Chairman
G G Kipp III - Regular Member

*The Glacier County Committee's
regularly scheduled meeting day is the
third Thursday of each month.*

FSA Office Personnel

Ed Daugherty – FLM
Debra Duke – FLPT
Michelle Edwards – CED
Nanna Flesch – PT
Mike Higgins – FLM
Sheila Koepke – PT
Bridget Larson – PT
Nita Tomsheck – PT

Dates to Remember:

March 15 – Spring grazing on
CRP acres begins
March 16 – **NAP Sales closing
date** for all crops including grazing
except value loss crops and honey
March 16 – Crop insurance sales
closing date for 2008 spring -
seeded crops
March 25-28 – FFA Convention –
Great Falls.
March 31 – Final loan/LDP
availability date for various crops
harvested in 2008
May 16 - **NAP Pull off date**
May 14 – Spring grazing on CRP
acres ends
May 15 – Beginning date of
Primary Nesting Season
June 1 – DCP signup deadline



FSA AG NEWS

March 2009

**FROM
MICHELLE'S
DESK**



I'm so glad spring is around the corner! We have a few deadlines that are also right around the corner. Please pay close attention to the 'Dates to Remember' to the left of this article. One thing I would like to mention is we have a new continuous CRP signup targeted for our area, the SAFE program. It has some wonderful additional incentive payments, in addition to the annual rental payment you would receive. One of them is a one-time payment of \$100 per acre. Read the article on it, it may be worth considering. There is also the NAP deadline, that article is very important. - The sales closing date for purchasing a NAP Policy is MARCH 16! DON'T MISS THIS DEADLINE!!! All new paperwork and forms are required for Payment Eligibility. There is a lot of new information required on these forms. You need to contact our office for an appointment prior to coming in to our office to complete these forms. At that time, we will let you know what information you need to bring with you. These forms must be completed before you can receive any program payments. Please contact our office as soon as possible for an appointment. We are also in the process of completing DCP (Direct & Counter Cyclical Payment Program) signup. Most of the contracts are ready for signature. Please stop by at your earliest convenience but before June 1, 2009 to sign your DCP Contract. Lots of important information enclosed so please read this newsletter carefully. As always, please contact our office if you have any questions. That is what we are here for!

**IF YOU HAVE ANY NEW LEASES OR CHANGES IN YOUR
OPERATION, PLEASE LET OUR OFFICE KNOW IMMEDIATELY!**

NAP Deadline March 16

For the 2009 crop year it is imperative to purchase Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and catastrophic (CAT) level of crop insurance for all insurable and non-insurable crops. This is not only for production coverage but also for eligibility for the new permanent disaster programs created in the 2008 Farm Bill.

In order for producers to be **eligible** for assistance under the Supplemental Revenue Assistance (**SURE**) Program and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, and Honey Bees, (**ELAP**), and the Tree Assistance Program (**TAP**) producers must obtain a plan of insurance for each insurable and non-insurable commodity on the farm, **excluding grazing**. To be eligible for assistance under the Livestock Forage Program (**LFP**) producers must obtain either coverage under the Pasture, Rangeland, and Forage Rainfall Index Pilot Program through crop insurance, or NAP coverage, or both on their grazing land.

Producers must file the required paperwork and pay the administrative fee by the NAP closing date of **March 16, 2009** for all crops except value-loss and honey. The deadline for value-loss and honey for 2009 has passed.

Please contact the office to ensure your eligibility for the new disaster assistance programs by March 16th.

**NATIONAL AGRICULTURE WEEK is March 15-21, 2009.**

It is a time to celebrate American agriculture and honor the people who work to meet our everyday needs. FSA in Montana thanks the many farmers and ranchers we work with on a daily basis.

2009 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) Signup

Sign up for the 2009 DCP program for farms with base acres is underway. Stop by our office at your earliest convenience to sign your DCP Contract. The deadline to have all signatures on the DCP Contract is June 1, 2009. Farms may not be enrolled after June 1 of the applicable contract period. There are no late filed provisions for contract years 2009-2012.

In addition to certain commodities, specific pulse crops have been added as an eligible commodity for the 2009 crop year for counter-cyclical payments only.

A producer with the sum of the base acreage on the farm with 10 acres or less must be a socially disadvantaged or limited resource farmer or rancher to be eligible for DCP payments.

Final Loan/LDP Availability is March 31

March 31 is the final loan/LDP availability date for Barley, Canola, Flaxseed, Oats, Rapeseed, Crambe and Wheat.

For the 2008 crop of the commodities listed above, loans and LDP's will no longer be available after March 31, 2009.

All New Payment Eligibility Forms Required for 2009 Programs

As a result of the new Farm Bill, all producers are required to complete new CCC-926 Adjusted Gross Income Forms. These are now year specific and will be subject to spot check once every 3 years. You will also need to complete a CCC-902 Payment Eligibility Form, which replaces the old CCC-502's you used to complete. The CCC-502's are still applicable to current active CRP Contracts for the remainder of the term of those CRP Contracts. These forms must be completed before you can receive any payments from our office.

Please contact our office as soon as possible for an appointment to complete this process.

Mixed Grain/Hay Loan LDP Eligibility

USDA does not establish loan rates for mixed commodities. A mixed commodity harvested as grain that does not meet grading standards is not eligible for a loan or Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP). A mixed commodity that is hayed or harvested as silage is not eligible for an LDP.

Eligibility for Grain/Oilseeds/Pulse Crops Harvested as **Grain** – If a mixed commodity is harvested as grain and a farm-stored loan or LDP is applied for, a sample of the harvested crop must be taken to a licensed Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) laboratory for grading, at the producer's expense. Loan or LDP eligibility will be determined based on the results of the sample.

Eligibility for Grain/Oilseeds/Pulse Crops Harvested as **Other Than Grain** – If the mixed commodity is harvested as hay or silage, there is no test to determine the percentage of each commodity in the mixture to establish the grade and class. Therefore, crops planted in a mixture and hayed or harvested for silage are not eligible for an LDP.

A commodity planted as a nurse crop with alfalfa may be eligible for an LDP if a full seeding is planted and the commodity is reported as the intended use for grain or forage. The County Committee may require documentation to support the seeding rate.

Ensure Benefits Are Received in a Timely Manner

To ensure USDA program benefits are received in a timely manner, please ensure you are consistent in the way you are presenting your operation to all USDA agencies including NRCS, Risk Management Agency (RMA), FSA and any other USDA agency programs you may partake in. For example, if you have signed up for program benefits with FSA as Joe Farmer, please sign up with NRCS as Joe Farmer. This will ensure Joe Farmer has completed all program paperwork and is eligible to receive payments. When in doubt, ask your county FSA Office.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Signup is Underway

Owners and operators of certain cropland may enroll eligible land in a new continuous CRP conservation practice entitled SAFE. USDA accepts offers by producers, provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements.

Producers can submit offers to voluntarily enroll acres in the CRP SAFE Program for a period of 10 years. In exchange, you receive annual CRP rental payments, incentives and cost-share assistance to establish habitat enhancing natural covers on eligible land. Eligible land is cropland that was planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity during 4 of 6 years from 1996 through 2001. The land must be physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity.

We require that practices under SAFE be managed during the life of the contract. We calculate the maximum CRP rental rate per acre in advance of the enrollment. This amount is usually paid in October of each year.

In addition to the annual rental payments, we will pay up to 50% of the eligible cost to establish a permanent cover. USDA also provides the following additional benefits to participants enrolling in the SAFE Program:

- An up-front, one-time CRP Signing Incentive Payment (SIP) of \$100 per acre, which is made after the contract is approved; and
- A Practice Incentive Payment (PIP) equal to 40% of the eligible installation costs for SAFE practices. We issue this one-time payment after the practice is installed, eligible costs are verified and other payment eligibility criteria are met.

The effective date of the CRP Contract is the first day of the month following the month of approval.

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- * **Ensuring Benefits are received timely**
- * **New SAFE Continuous CRP Program**
- * **New Breaking & Seeding of Native Sod**

Important Dates to Remember

- March 15** – Spring grazing on CRP acres begins
- March 16**– NAP sales closing date for all crops except value loss crops and honey
- March 16** – Crop insurance sales closing date for 2008 spring-seeded crops
- March 31** – Final loan/LDP availability date for various crops harvested in 2008
- May 14** – Spring grazing on CRP acres ends
- May 15** – Beginning date of Primary Nesting Season
- June 1** – 2009 DCP signup ends

Breaking & Seeding Native Sod

There has been a lot of interest across Montana to break native sod and convert it to cropland. Farmers need to be aware that if you are planning or considering breaking up native sod to crop it this spring, that you need to get to your USDA Service Center, before you start breaking the fields. At FSA, you will need to complete compliance paperwork indicating where the land is located and how you intend to break it. NRCS will use that information to make a Highly Erodible Land (HEL) determination. This determination will let you know if your plan on how you will break the native sod could cause you to be out of compliance with the HEL provisions of the Farm Bill.

If you have already broke the native sod last fall, prior to getting the compliance paperwork completed at FSA and NRCS, you need to get in and get it done before you plant this springs crop.

Non-compliance with the HEL or Wetland Conservation provisions is very severe! Do not take the chance with your program payments or participation with other USDA programs. If you have any question please contact NRCS at 873-4292 ex.111