Jan. 2013

Harney County FSA Office

Kellie Frank
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Hours
Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Harney County Staff

Patty Modey, Chief Farm Loans

Julie Neuschwander, Farm Loans

Crystal Franklin, Program Technician

Results

Congratulations to Frank Catterson. Frank was re-elected to represent farmers from Local Administrative Area 1 on the county committee. Frank was elected to his third consecutive term. The election results for Local Administrative Area 1 are:

Frank Catterson — Elected to the county committee (COC)

FSA appreciates all of the voters for taking the time to complete the election ballot. The county committee system works only because of your participation.

The committee members will hold their organizational meeting in January to determine who will serve as the county committee chairman and vice-chairman.

2011 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program Applications

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) will continue to accept SURE applications for 2011 crop losses through June 7, 2013. The SURE Program provides payments to producers when crop revenues are less than the crop guarantee. The SURE Program payment is equal to 60 percent of the difference between the crop guarantee and revenue. To be eligible, the producer must have at least one crop with a 10 percent production loss.

To determine the guarantee and revenue for the SURE Program, all crops on all farms for a producer are included in the calculation. Payments under the SURE Program are limited to $100,000.

To be eligible for the 2011 SURE Program, producers must have crop insurance on all insurable crops. For crops that are not covered by crop insurance such as pumpkins and cucumbers, producers must have purchased Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage from FSA. The Crop Insurance and NAP purchase requirement is waived for crops that are not economically significant to the farming operation.

For more information concerning the 2011 SURE program or other Farm Service Agency programs, contact your local FSA office or visit the Farm Service Agency website at www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

The noninsured crop disaster assistance program (NAP) is a federally funded program that helps producers reduce their risk when growing food and fiber crops, specialty crops and crops for livestock feed. These benefits are only available for crops for which the catastrophic level of crop insurance is not available. Application for coverage must be filed by the applicable crop's application closing date.

Production records for all crops must be reported to FSA no later than the acreage reporting date for the crop for the following year. FSA requires that any production reported in a loss year be verified according to agency specifications. *NAP losses must be reported within 15 days of loss.*

Controlled Substance

Any person convicted under federal or state law of a controlled substance violation could be ineligible for USDA payments or benefits. Violations include planting, harvesting or growing a prohibited plant. Prohibited plants include marijuana, opium poppies and other drug producing plants.

Marketing Assistance Loans (MAL)

Short-term financing is available through FSA's low interest commodity loans for eligible harvested production. A nine-month Marketing Assistance Loan provides financing that allows producers to store production for later marketing at a potentially better price. The crop may be stored on farm or in a warehouse.

Loans are available for producers who share in the risk of producing the eligible commodity and maintain beneficial interest in the crop through the duration of the loan. Beneficial interest means retaining the ability to make decisions about the commodity, responsibility for loss because of damage to the commodity and title to the commodity. Once beneficial interest in a commodity is lost, it is ineligible for a loan, even if you regain beneficial interest.

The deadline to request a grain loan is March 31, 2013, for wheat and oats and May 31, 2013, for corn, soybeans and sorghum.

Hispanic and Women Farmer and Rancher Claims Period

Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA in past decades can file claims until March 25, 2013.

The process offers a voluntary alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or female farmer and rancher who can prove that USDA denied their applications for loan or loan servicing assistance for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000.

As announced in February 2011, the voluntary claims process will make available at least $1.33 billion for cash awards and tax relief payments, plus up to $160 million in farm debt relief to eligible Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers. There are no filing fees to participate in the program.

USDA will continue reaching out to potential Hispanic and female claimants, around the country to inform those who may be eligible for this program.

Website: www.farmerclaims.gov
Phone: 1-888-508-4429
Deadline for Claims: March 25, 2013.

Claimants can obtain a claims package in the mail by calling 1-888-509-4429 or by visiting the website www.farmerclaims.gov . Public meetings are also being held in many areas to share further information. Contact your nearest FSA office to get a schedule of meetings in your area.

Electronic News Delivery

The USDA Farm Service Agency offices have moved to a paperless news distribution system.

Producers are asked to enroll in the new *GovDelivery* system, which provides notices, newsletters and electronic reminders instead of a hard copy through the mail.

FSA, like many other organizations, is trying to work smarter and be more efficient. Moving to electronic notifications via email helps conserve resources and save taxpayer dollars. Producers can now subscribe to receive free email updates by going to www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe.

Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their purchases or sales of property to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA.

All individuals who are not U.S. citizens, and have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form (FSA-153) could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

Farming Operation Changes

Producers who have bought or sold land, or added or dropped rented land from their operation must report those changes to the FSA office as soon as possible. A copy of the deed or recorded land contract for purchased property is needed to maintain accurate records with FSA. Failure to report changes can lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties. While making record updates, be sure to update signature authorizations. Making record changes now will save time in the Spring.

Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Compliance

Landowners and operators are reminded that in order to receive payments from USDA, compliance with Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions is required. Farmers with HEL determined soils must comply with tillage, crop residue, and rotation requirements as specified in their conservation plan.

Producers should notify FSA prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to insure compliance. If you intend to clear any trees to create new cropland, these areas will need to be reviewed to ensure any work will not jeopardize your eligibility for benefits.

Landowners and operators can complete form AD-1026 Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification to determine whether a referral to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is necessary.

For more information on Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation provisions, contact a FSA County Office or visit the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/.

Special Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should notify the county FSA office staff in person or by phone. This service is provided for office visits and any special event sponsored by FSA.

Power of Attorney

For those who find it difficult to visit the county office because of work schedules, distance, health, etc., FSA has a power of attorney form available that allows producers to designate another person to conduct business at the office. If interested, contact our office or any Farm Service Agency office for more information.

Bank Account Changes

Current policy mandates that FSA payments be electronically transferred into a bank account. In order for timely payments to be made, producers need to notify the FSA county office when an account has been changed or if another financial institution purchases the bank where payments are sent. Payments can be delayed if the FSA office is not aware of updates to bank accounts and bank routing numbers.

Appeal Process

After an FSA official makes a decision on a request for USDA services or application, the producer will be sent a letter informing him/her of the decision and options that can be pursued.

Generally, program participants have three choices — an informal review with the original agency decision-maker, an opportunity for mediation and finally an appeal to the next level of authority within the agency. County office staff has further details.

FSA Signature Policy

Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office staff by either spouse.

There are exceptions to the rule. Spouses may not sign on behalf of each other for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities.

Individual signatures are also required on certain Farm Loan Program and Farm Storage Facility Loan documents.

For more clarification on spousal signature authority, contact your local FSA office.

IRS 1099 Changes

Calendar year 2012 brought changes to the way FSA reports farm program payments to the producer and to the IRS.

In past years, IRS Forms 1099-G would be issued to show all program payments received from the Farm Service Agency, regardless of the amount.

For calendar year 2012, producers whose total reportable payments from FSA were less than $600 will not receive IRS Form 1099-G. Also, producers who receive payments from more than one county will only receive one Form 1099-G if the total of all payments from all counties is $600 or more.

The same changes will apply to producers and vendors who normally receive IRS Form 1099-MISC from FSA.

Harney County
FSA Office
PO Box 1200
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Hines, OR 97738

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

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Beginning and Limited Resource Farmers

FSA assists beginning farmers and members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more that 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's median size.

Additional program information, loan applications and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit www.fsa.usda.gov

Selected Interest Rates for January 2013	
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%
Farm Operating - Direct	1.25%
Farm Ownership - Direct	3.125%
Limited Resource	5.00%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50%
Emergency	1.25%
Farm Storage Facility – 7 year	1.125%
Farm Storage Facility – 10 year	1.625%
Farm Storage Facility – 12 year	1.875%
Sugar Storage Facility	2.125%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.125%

Dates to Remember	
Jan. 1	FSA Offices closed, Federal Holiday
Jan. 21	MLK birthday holiday
Jan. 31	Last day to apply for LDP for Unshorn Lamb Pelts
June 7	SURE applications accepted for 2011 losses

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.