



August 2010

Twin Falls FSA - Quarterly “Tater Talk”



USDA Twin Falls County FSA

1441 Fillmore St. Ste B
Twin Falls, ID 83301

Phone: (208) 733-5380
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www.fsa.usda.gov

Hours

Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

County Staff

Lance Phillips – CED
Candy Hansing – PT
Susan Kime – PT
Jenae Prescott – PT
Angela Sandoval – PT

County Committee

Carol Wells—Chair LAA 1
Kent Lierman – LAA 2
FT Freestone – LAA 3

FSA Committee Meetings @ USDA Service Center

- August – No Meeting.
- September 7th, 10 A.M.

New CRP Sign-up Begins August 2, 2010

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that a general sign-up for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) begins on **August 2, 2010 through August 27, 2010.**

The general CRP program establishes a rental payment for both irrigated and non land for 10 year contracts for establishing a long term conserving plant cover for wildlife & conservation purposes. Eligible land must be cropland, including field margins and pivot corners, that were planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity for four of the six crop years from **2002 – 2007.**

The rental rates have increased from previous CRP contracts for Twin Falls County. Most soils rates are **\$40.00 to \$42.00** per acre in Twin Falls County with some soils in the \$60 to \$130 / acre range. With areas of Twin Falls County that continually run short on water and new pivot installations that have made corners that are not cost effective to irrigate, the CRP program is an option to receive payments for setting those areas aside to reduce soil erosion, improve water and air quality, and develop wildlife / pollinator habitat.

Land currently not enrolled in CRP may be offered in this sign-up provided all eligibility requirements are met. Additionally, current CRP participants with contracts expiring this fall may make new contract offers. Contracts awarded under this sign-up are scheduled to become effective Oct. 1, 2010. Crops that are not harvested by Oct 1st will still be able to be harvested without penalty if enrolled in CRP.

FSA will evaluate and rank eligible CRP offers using an Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) for environmental benefits to be gained from enrolling the land in CRP. The EBI consists of five environmental factors (wildlife, water, soil, air and enduring bene-

fits) and cost. Decisions on the EBI cutoff will be made after the sign-up ends and after analyzing the EBI data of all the offers.

In addition to the general sign-up, CRP's continuous sign-up program will be ongoing. Continuous acres represent the most environmentally desirable and sensitive land. Contact your Twin Falls County Office at 208-733-5380 ext 2 to make an appointment. It will take several hours to process a bid so please make an appointment so we have time to fully service your bid.



**From the Idaho
FSA State
Committee:**
Scott McLeod, Chair

**Amy Woodworth-Wynn, Roberta Bodine and
Matt Gellings, members.**

Dear Idaho Farmers and Ranchers:

This is the first chance for the Idaho State Committee to tell all Idaho farmers and ranchers how honored we are to serve you. We are all producers and have worked with FSA programs for many years. We understand the importance of farm programs to your success and we will do everything possible to make sure Idaho producers get the best service from our many outstanding employees throughout the State.

Our emphasis for the month of August is the General sign-up for the Conservation Reserve Program. CRP is the largest conservation program in America and has produced untold benefits for American agriculture, wildlife and water quality.

When farmers sign a CRP contract we agree to many very important requirements in managing CRP land and maintaining conservation practices for the full term of the contract, even if we sell the land!



Following are some important items to remember when you sign-up for CRP.

- If CRP land is sold you must make certain the new owner assumes the CRP contract. If not, you will be held responsible to refund all the payments received from the beginning of the contract, plus interest.
- In addition to returning all payments, CRP contract holders who sell land without a successor are subject to a penalty of 25% of the annual payment. The total refund you might have to make could easily exceed \$100,000.
- There are instances when developers offer a large payment for CRP land. Remember, many of those buyers may not be eligible for CRP because of their high incomes. Be sure to talk to the buyer about succeeding to the contract or make arrangements on who repays if the contract term is violated. Make these agreements, in writing, before you make the sale.
- You are responsible to control weeds on CRP ground. You cannot plant and then walk away for 10 years. The penalties for not controlling weeds can be as severe as terminating the contract. You could be required to refund all the payments.
- The CRP agreement you sign is a serious contract. Make sure you understand all the details.

The State Committee has already heard appeals from producers who sold their land without a successor or did not control weeds. Except in very unusual situations, federal rules do not allow us to forgive repayment and penalties.

CRP is a great program and we look forward to working with all Idaho producers in the years to come.

Sincerely,

*Scott McLeod, Amy Woodworth-Wynn,
Roberta Bodine and Matt Gellings*

Actively Engaged

FSA wants to remind producers about the rules that govern the requirements to be 'actively engaged' in farming. These rules apply to eligibility for payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) or Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program administered by FSA.

Normally the stockholder or a member of a legal entity **must** make contributions of active personal labor and/or active personal management for the farming operation. The contributions are to be performed on regular basis, must be identifiable, and separate from the contributions of others.

The exception to this rule for a stockholder or member of a legal entity only occurs if both of the following apply:

At least half of the interest in the legal entity is held by stockholders or members who are providing active personal labor or active personal management; and

The total direct payments received, both directly and indirectly, by the legal entity and each of the members can't exceed \$40,000.

Crop Reporting Complete 2010

The Twin Falls County Office would like to thank all the producers who timely participated in the 2010 crop reports that finished June 30th. The office is always busy during this time of year and your patience was appreciated. If you haven't completed your 2010 crop report you will not be eligible for FSA payments. Late filed crop reports are still being taken and for a minimum fee of \$46.00 per farm, crops can still be reported but have to be visually inspected.

DCP / ACRE Programs Complete 2010

June 1st marked the final date for the 2010 Direct & Counter Cyclical program and Average Crop Revenue Election enrollment. Participation this year was higher than last year, but we still had some people who missed the deadline.

Unlike the Crop Reporting program DCP & ACRE do not have late filed provisions under current rules. In these tough economic times, any payments that are missed can make a difference. At the end of each signup deadline we discuss with the County Office Committee and FSA staff ways of improving producer participation to better serve you.

During 2010 we began mailing monthly newsletters, but due to budgets the "Tater Talk" newsletters were reduced to a quarterly mailing, with monthly newsletters being available on-line (*see bottom of page 2 for web address*).

Additionally, the last two months of signup Twin Falls FSA staff sent two post cards, published articles in the local newspaper and posted announcements on the local FOX news network to inform you of upcoming deadlines.

In an effort to continue to improve participation we would like to make all producers aware that for **FY 2011 the DCP / ACRE signup can be enrolled starting October 1, 2010.** The enrollment of these contracts does not require that you know what you will be planting, just that you have re-established terms to operate the land for the 2011 year. You can also sign these contracts On-line by establishing an eauthentication account (*see page 4*) with your local FSA office and enroll from your home computer.

Disaster Program 2011

The new 2008 Farm Bill disaster programs have made more than \$1 Billion in payments in 2010 to producers who have experienced loss due to natural disasters. As we enter the time of year where rangeland fires and drought can cause loss of grazing land, FSA would like to remind producers that to be eligible for the Livestock Feed Program (LFP) for fires on federally managed lands and drought loss payments the grazing acres need to be insured with a CAT level insurance plan.

Fires on private grounds due to a natural disaster require that **all crops** of economic significance are covered with a CAT level insurance plan for the Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP). This is the same requirement to be eligible for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE) for farm crops.

FSA offers CAT level insurance coverage for any crop not covered by Federal Crop Insurance through our Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). The NAP program costs \$250 per crop up to \$750 per farm in a county to insure all crops and make producers eligible for these disaster programs. NAP insurance needs to be purchased by **December 1st** of the prior year for **perennial crops** to be eligible for disaster programs. If you have questions about the program, please contact Candy Hansing at the Twin Falls FSA office.

Marketing Assistance Loans

A Marketing Assistance Loan (MAL) is available for producers who share in the risk of producing the crop. To be eligible, a producer must maintain continuous beneficial interest in the crop from harvest through the earlier of the date the loan is repaid or CCC takes title to the commodity. Beneficial interest means retaining the ability to make decisions about the commodity; responsibility for loss or damage to the commodity; and title to the commodity. Once beneficial interest in a commodity is lost, the commodity is ineligible for loan — even if the producer regains beneficial interest.

For current loan rates or to begin the MAL process contact Jenae Prescott at the Twin Falls Office.

Preventing Fraud

The Farm Service Agency supports the Risk Management Agency in the prevention of fraud, waste and abuse of the Federal Crop Insurance Program. FSA has been, and will continue to, assist RMA and insurance providers by monitoring crop conditions throughout the growing season. FSA will continue to refer all suspected cases of fraud, waste and abuse directly to RMA.

Producers can report suspected cases to the FSA office, RMA, or the Office of the Inspector General.

DEQ – Crop Residue Burning Update

The crop residue burning (CRB) program is designed to enable growers to burn under certain conditions while protecting public health from smoke impacts. The program is managed by DEQ on lands other than the five Indian Reservations in Idaho.

Crop residue is defined as any vegetative material remaining in the field after harvest, or vegetative material produced on conservation reserve program lands. It includes crop residue fields, pastures, spots within a field or pasture, bales that have broken in the field during harvest, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands, food plots, and blanching or flaming operations. It does not include vegetation along ditch banks, fence lines, orchard pruning, or forest slash piles.

Under the CRB program, growers must obtain approval from DEQ before burning by registering for a Permit-by-Rule before they want to burn. Detailed information on when and where the burn is to take place is required on the registration. A \$2 fee per acre registered must also be paid in advance of the burn. In addition, growers must obtain other permits, such as a fire safety permit, if required by other agencies.

Burn days are limited to weekdays during daylight hours only. Burning on weekends and state and federal holidays is prohibited. Burning can only occur in fields where the crop residue was generated.

For questions please contact Bobby Dye or Tami Aslett @ 736-2190.

2010 Strip – Till Seminar & Field Demonstration

The Amalgamated Sugar Company LLC in coordination with the NRCS would like to invite all producers to a strip-till seminar and field demonstration. The presentation will be **AUGUST 26, 2010**, 10:00 am at the Morey's Steakhouse and Event Center, 219 E 3rd N. in Burley.

From 10:00 am to Noon will be the "Presentations & Panel Discussions" followed by lunch that will be served at Morey's Steakhouse. After lunch field demonstrations will be at 1:30 pm 100 S 700 W, in Paul. Travel Directions are as follows : From stop-light in Paul, go west one mile to 700 West. We hope that you will be able to attend. Please call Susan Looper at the NRCS Rupert Field Office at (208) 436-4777 extension 27 if you have more questions.

Twin Falls County FSA Office
1441 Fillmore St. Ste B
Twin Falls, ID 83301



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Electronic Services Available

If a producer has Internet access, program participants can access many services from home 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and receive approval and payment by direct deposit within 48 hours. To participate in these services, you must meet all program eligibility requirements. Online services have stringent security measures to protect your private information.

To utilize electronic services a producer needs an active USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account, which requires an e-mail address and filling out an online registration form at <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/> followed by a visit to the county office for identity verification.

Contact your local USDA Service Center for more information.

Selected Interest Rates for August 2010	
Farm Operating - Direct	2.5%
Farm Ownership - Direct	4.6%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.500%
Emergency	3.750%

Dates to Remember	
August 1	Recons must be requested
August 2	Deadline to submit COC election nominations
Aug. 2	General CRP Signup Begins
Sept 1	Deadline for ACRE benchmark (2004-2008) actual 2009 yield
Oct. 1	DCP / ACRE 2011 signup begins
Dec 1	NAP sign-up deadline for 2011 Coverage of Crops.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance programs. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

4 To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202)-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."