



November 5, 2008

## Columbia/Walla Walla County News

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

**Julie Himmelberger, CED**  
Julie.himmelberger@wa.usda.gov

**Walla Walla County FSA**  
1501 Business One Circle #100  
Walla Walla WA 99362-9526  
(phone) 509-522-6347  
(FAX) 509-525-2811

**County Committee**  
Steve Bughi, Chair  
Steve Hair, V-Chair  
Jack McCaw, Member  
Valerie Cochran, Advisor

### Office Staff

Nicole Armijo      Jeri Casali  
Norma Colunga    Lee Walters  
Ray Painter

**Columbia County FSA**  
202 South Second St  
Dayton WA 99328-1327  
(phone) 509-382-2421  
(FAX) 509-382-4084

### County Committee

Dan McKinley, Chair  
Jay Penner, V-Chair  
Valerie Turner, Member

### Office Staff

Christy Bell  
Gerri Richter

### Office Hours

Monday – Friday  
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

### Farm Loan Staff

Jon Wilson, Farm Loan Mgr.  
Franklin County FSA Office  
Phone: (509) 545-8543

### Dates to Remember:

Nov. 11 Veteran's Day  
Office Closed

**Nov. 18 Farm Program Mtg.**  
**Wa2 Community College**

Nov. 27 Thanksgiving  
Office Closed



October 1 marks the first day of fiscal year 2009 and a very busy time for FSA offices around the country. Payments on most programs administered by the Farm Service Agency are issued in October. If you are expecting a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) payment or a Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) payment and have not received it, please contact the county office and we can check to see if the payment was issued.

With that in mind: Have you changed your checking account? Have you changed banks in the last year? Please notify your Farm Service Agency of any banking changes that you have made. Remember that FSA assistance payments go to your Direct Deposit. Don't make it impossible for your assistance payments to find you.

### FARM PROGRAM INFORMATIONAL MEETING SCHEDULED

I have scheduled a bi-county informational meeting to be held at the Walla Walla Community College in the new Water and Environmental Center. Please mark your calendars for **Tuesday, November 18**. We will plan to start the meeting at 1:00 and hope to provide you with as many answers as possible to your questions regarding the new farm programs, payment limitation provisions, and disaster programs. Please try to attend this meeting as there will be a great deal of information regarding program changes reviewed at this meeting.

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in any meeting, event or function should contact the county office. FSA is committed to making programs accessible to all customers.

### NEW TERMINOLOGY FOR FARM PROGRAMS

The 2008 Farm Bill grants exceptions to certain program rules for beginning, socially disadvantaged and limited resource farmers/ranchers. This statutory terminology is not new to FSA's loan programs but it is new for most other programs. Definitions may differ slightly depending on the program.

A beginning farmer/rancher is an individual or an entity who has operated a farm for 10 years or less and who participates substantially in the farm/ranch operation. For loan purposes of purchasing a farm, the farm must be no more than 30 percent of the median size farm in the county. All members of an entity must meet the definition for the entity to be considered beginning farmers or ranchers. This definition applies to the purchase of a 2008 risk management waiver for disaster assistance programs.

A socially disadvantaged farmer/rancher is a member of a demographic group whose members have historically been subjected to racial, ethnic, or for some programs, gender prejudice. Groups include: American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asians, Blacks or African Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics/Latinos. For DCP, ACRE and farm loans, women meet the socially disadvantaged definition. Socially disadvantaged, without the gender consideration, is applicable for the purchase of a 2008 risk management waiver for disaster assistance programs.

A limited resource farmer/rancher is an individual who, in the previous two years, has had gross farm sales of not more than \$100,000 (base year 2004) adjusted for inflation. Additionally, the farmer/rancher must have a total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of four or less than 50% of county median household income. A tool that adjusts for inflation and county can be found at <http://www.lfctool.sc.egov.usda.gov/tool.asp> or ask for assistance at our office. The limited resource definition applies to DCP, ACRE, ECP, NAP, farm loans and the purchase of a 2008 risk management waiver for disaster assistance programs.

### 2008 GRAIN LOANS

If you need some operating money and are not ready to sell your crop yet, you might want to consider the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) loan program. Wheat, barley, corn, oats and some pulse crops are eligible for price support benefits.

CCC loans are nine-month loans on warehouse or farm stored grain at a very good interest rate. (Recent interest rates are: August interest rate of 3.375%, September interest rate of 3.25% and October interest rate of 3.0%.) Use the money to pay current bills or to repay loans with higher interest rates. The loan can be repaid at any time during the 9-month loan period. Loans are paid at the lessor of the "posted county price" (PCP) or principal plus interest. The grain may also be forfeited to FSA at loan maturity instead of repaying the loan principal and interest. The interest rate remains fixed at the rate in affect the month the loan is disbursed until the first of January. On January 1, the interest rates change to the rate in affect for January. 2008 crop loan rates are as follows:

<b>Crop</b>	<b>Loan Rate</b>
Soft White Wheat	\$2.70/bushel
Hard Red Spring Wheat	\$3.28/bushel
Hard Red Winter Wheat	\$3.32/bushel Walla Walla County \$3.31/bushel Columbia County
Barley	\$91.25/ton Walla Walla County \$90.00/ton Columbia County
Corn	\$2.38/bushel
Oats	\$1.26/bushel

For loan rates on other eligible crops, please contact the county office.

### **2009 NON-INSURED CROP LOSS COVERAGE (NAP)**

Producers needing to purchase catastrophic crop loss coverage for noninsurable crops, planted in the fall for harvest in 2009, need to stop by the county office and complete the process. Remember, to be eligible for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE), the new disaster payment program, you must obtain Federal Crop Insurance on all insurable crops and NAP coverage on non-insurable crops of economic significance. The cost for the NAP coverage is \$250 per crop, not to exceed \$750 per producer, per county.

The application closing date for most perennial and fall planted crops has been extended to December 1, 2008. Do not miss this deadline!

Please remember, you are responsible for providing crop production records to the County office on crops covered by NAP. Production records on NAP covered crops are due no later than the subsequent crop year final acreage reporting date. (i.e., for 2008 crops, production records are due in the county office no later than June 30, 2009). More information regarding the new disaster programs will be provided at the November 18 county informational meeting.

### **SIGNATURE AUTHORITY FOR SPOUSES**

Spouses may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest unless written notification denying a spouse this authority has been provided to the county office. A spouse may not, however, sign a Power of Attorney on behalf of the spouse, nor may they sign on behalf of the other as an authorized signatory for entities. Spouses must also have a Power of Attorney on file to sign for claim settlements such as promissory notes.

### **The New WALLA WALLA Ag SERVICE CENTER**

Construction of the new Walla Walla County Ag Service Center is well underway. We are looking forward to the new location and believe access to the new building will be much easier than in our current location. The new location is 325 North 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Where is 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue you ask? Well, if you are coming into Walla Walla from the North, on Highway 125 (past the State Penitentiary) just cross Pine Street and you are on 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The new USDA building is on the right before you cross the railroad tracks. When travelling East down Rose Street from College Place, take a left on 13<sup>th</sup> (before you cross the railroad tracks on Rose Street). You will see the new Foundry Winery, then our new building across Abadie Street from the winery. We will keep you posted as to the "grand opening."

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