



NEWSLETTER



January 2012

Whatcom County Farm Service Agency

6975 Hannegan Rd.
Lynden, WA 98264
Phone- (360)354-5658
Fax- (360)354-4678

Office Hours

Mon. – Fri. 8:00 a.m – 4:30 p.m.

County Committee

Teresa Sigatowicz, Member
Dan Noteboom, Vice Chair
Cheryl De Haan, Member
Satpaul Neger, Advisor

Farm Program Staff

Darcy Maldonado, PT
darcy.maldonado@wa.usda.gov
Betty Snell, PT
betty.snell@wa.usda.gov

Farm Program Staff

Mark Turner, FLM
mark.turner@wa.usda.gov
Lynn Alderson FLO
Lynn.alderon@wa.usda.gov
Marlene Garber PT
Marlene.garber@wa.usda.gov

Next COC Meeting

January 25

Dates to Remember

NAP Deadlines 2012 Crop Year
Mar. 15, 2012 Spring planted
crops.

Jan. 23, 2012 DCP and ACRE
enrollment begins.

Office Closed

Jan. 16, 2012 MLK holiday

Feb. 20, 2012 Presidents day

County Committee Election Results

Congratulations to Cheryl De Haan who was elected to a three year term on the Whatcom County Committee. Larry Tjoelker was elected as the first alternate and Ajaib Chauhan as the second alternate. They represent the Local Administrative Area 1. Also serving on the County Committee are Dan Noteboom, Teresa Sigatowicz and Satpaul Neger who serves as Advisor.

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

Employee Retires

David Unruh, who served as our County Executive Director for the last three years, retired December 2nd. Mr. Unruh gave FSA 30 years of dedicated service. We wish him well and a happy retirement.

Move with FSA to Instant Electronic Information

Our office has been busy obtaining producer emails as the USDA Farm Service Agency is moving toward a paperless operation.

Producers can now enroll in the new GovDelivery system for notices, newsletters and electronic reminders and discontinue their slow and costly paper copies received through the mail.

FSA, like many other organizations, is working smarter and more efficiently. Conversion to electronic notifications via email helps conserve resources and save taxpayer dollars.

If you have received an automated email welcoming you to GovDelivery you are already signed up. Otherwise, subscribe now to receive free e-mail updates by going to <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe> or use the box "Sign up for updates" on the FSA homepage. Select "email updates" in the lower right navigation box and then select updates by state and county, then select the "+" next to Washington and the interested counties.

Due to limited funds, Newsletters will no longer be mailed out. Please put the message out to all your farming friends. We don't want anyone to miss important sign up dates and program information.

2012 DCP/Acre Sign Up

2012 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) enrollment begins Jan. 23, 2012 and ends June 1, 2012. No advance payments will be issued for 2012 contracts.

IMPORTANT REMINDER:

Changes on the farm before or after enrolling in DCP/ACRE must be immediately reported to the local FSA office. Examples: ownership changes, producer changes (individuals and entities, and change in crop shares arrangements.

2010 SURE Sign up

The deadline for producers to submit applications for 2010 crop year Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE) is June 1, 2012.

The SURE program provides benefits for crop losses due to eligible weather related disaster conditions affecting crops grown from 2008 through 2011 crop years. 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.

Producers who suffer eligible losses must have crop insurance or a Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program policy for all crops of economic significance to be eligible for SURE benefits. Socially disadvantaged, limited resource, or beginning farmers and ranchers are exempt from the insurance linkage requirement.

A fact sheet with more detailed information is available on the FSA website. Maps of disaster designations by county are on the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/wa. For more information, contact this office.

AGI Forms Required for 2012 Participants

Reminder: Producers receiving payments for 2012 FSA and NRCS programs are required to complete Adjusted Gross Income forms (CCC-931).

The form has been revised to reflect an additional AGI limitation applicable only to 2012 direct payments. In addition to the \$500,000 average nonfarm AGI and the \$750,000 average farm AGI limitation, a \$1 million average AGI limitation will be applicable for 2012 direct payments. These new AGI forms are available today from your county office or on the FSA internet site at <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eForms/welcomeAction.do?Home> click browse Forms and at form number type in 931. Complete one for each entity receiving payment and one for each shareholding member.

Foreign Investors 90 Day Rule

Foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land are required by law to report your land holdings, acquisitions, leases of 10 years or more, and land use changes within 90 days of these transactions. Report these changes to the local FSA office. Failure to report these changes can result in a civil penalty of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of your interest in agricultural land.

Financing for Beginning Farmers and Socially Disadvantaged Applicants

FSA's loan programs are designed to help family farmers who are temporarily unable to obtain commercial credit. In many cases, these are beginning farmers who have insufficient net worth to qualify for commercial credit.

The law also requires FSA to reserve or target loan funds for exclusive use by beginning farmers. Funds remain targeted for beginning farmers in the guaranteed programs until April 1 of each year. In the direct programs, funds are targeted for beginning farmers until September 1 of each year.

A beginning farmer or rancher is an individual or entity who:

- has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years
- substantially participates in the operation
- for Farm Ownership loan purposes, does not own a farm greater than 30 percent of the average size farm in the county
- for Farm Ownership loan purposes, must have participated in the business operation of a farm for at least 3 years.

Maximum amounts of indebtedness are \$300,000 for direct loans and

\$1,214,000 (amount varies annually based on inflation) for guaranteed loans.

FSA has a down payment program to assist beginning farmers and socially disadvantaged applicants to purchase a farm or ranch. This program also provides a means for retiring farmers and ranchers to transfer their land to a future generation.

Eligible beginning farmers and socially disadvantaged applicants are given first priority to purchase FSA acquired properties. For more information about FSA loan programs, contact Mark or Lynn.

NRCS Programs

The Natural Resources Conservation Service has a couple of program sign ups.

One is for financial and technical assistance for on-farm energy conservation and the other for the Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative program. Contact Alex or Joy regarding program information or deadlines at (360)354-2035.

Women in Agriculture Conference - Registration Open

The Women in Agriculture conference will be held on Saturday, February 11 and will broadcast two engaging speakers to 16 different locations throughout the state. The new localized format of the conference is designed to let farm women benefit from a statewide conference while still meeting their on-farm duties.

Website registration is now available online at www.womeninag.wsu.edu. Persons with a disability requiring special accommodations while participating in this program may call WSU Extension 509-745-8531