



July 7, 2004

# The Hartley County Harvester

**Hartley County FSA  
District 1**  
PO Box 177  
Hartley, TX 79044-0177

Voice: (806) 365-4453  
FAX: (806) 365-4446

**Hours:**  
Monday-Friday  
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

**County Committee:**  
Joe Parker  
Jason Schniederjan  
Bud Snead

**Minority Advisor:**  
Babette Spinhirne

**Farm Program Staff:**  
Glen Clugy, CED  
Becky Brown, PT  
Becky Voight, PT

**Farm Loan Staff:**  
(Dalhart Office)  
Marc Lathem, FLM  
Barbara Koch, PT

Regular Committee Meetings held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each Month.

## Crop Reporting Deadline Nears

Remember to report your crop acres by July 15, 2004. One condition of the Farm Bill requires anyone participating in the Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) to report all cropland which includes all crops and land uses (including failed acres) on a farm in order to be eligible for payment and prevent loss of benefits. You are also required to file an acreage report if you:

- Participate in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP),
- Request an LDP or commodity loan,
- Participate in the Non-insured Assistance Program (NAP).

To serve you more effectively, please call this office and make an appointment prior to coming in to report your acreage. Remember, reports taken after July 15, 2004 will be considered late-filed and fees will apply.

If you have crop insurance, make sure you also file a crop report with your agent too.

## COC Election Cycle Begins

Beginning July 15, 2004, farmers and ranchers can nominate local producers to serve on the County Committee (COC). The first step in the process is for qualified voters to nominate candidates. If you are qualified to vote, you can nominate yourself or another producer to run for a seat on the committee. Nominating petitions must be submitted to the office by September 3, 2004.

The County Committee helps make national farm programs fit the needs of local producers. For example, they make decisions on price support loans, yields and disaster assistance.

This year's election will be held for LAA #3 (southeastern portion of the County). The position is currently held by Joe Parker, however; due to term limitations, Mr. Parker will not be eligible to run for this position again.

Important dates for this year's election are:

- July 15<sup>th</sup>; Nomination period begins
- September 3<sup>rd</sup>; Last day to file nomination forms with the FSA office.
- November 8<sup>th</sup>; Ballots mailed to eligible voters.
- December 6<sup>th</sup>; Last day to return voted and signed ballots to the FSA office.
- January 1, 2005; Elected Committee members and alternates take office.

Forms are on hand at the county office. You can also find them online at [www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/elections](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/elections).

The County Committee system is your opportunity to have a voice in delivery of federal farm programs in Hartley County – we encourage you to participate fully in the nomination and election process.

## Grassland Reserve Assistance

Landowners have less than a month to file applications for the Grassland Reserve Program. July 23, 2004, is the deadline to submit GRP offers and have them considered for 2004 fiscal year funding.

Grasslands eligible for enrollment in this program may be native grassland, improved rangeland or improved pastureland. Other acreage that may qualify for enrollment includes land containing forbs or shrubs, or land located in an area historically dominated by grassland. Offers for participation in GRP must include 40 or more contiguous acres.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will evaluate each offer and rate the eligibility of the land according to specific criteria, including current vegetative cover, susceptibility to urban sprawl and the potential for conversion to cropland.

Landowners whose applications are selected for enrollment in GRP will receive assistance to support grazing operations, to increase and maintain plant and animal biodiversity and to protect grass and range lands under the greatest threat of conversion.

## Maintenance on DCP Acreage

DCP participants are required to control water and wind erosion and weeds including noxious weeds on ALL DCP base acres. Weeds are not an acceptable cover. Failure to control weeds or limit erosion on contract acres will cost you \$18/acre plus the cost of completing the measures. Program benefits will be lost if the County Committee determines you failed to demonstrate a good faith effort to control weeds and/or erosion.

## Bank Account Changes

In order to receive timely payments, you need to notify this office if you change or close your account or if your bank is purchased by another financial institution. Payments can be delayed if we are not aware of changes to account or bank routing numbers.

## Special Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment. If special accommodations are required, please call the FSA office and we will be happy to make any arrangements that are needed.

**Dates to Remember**

July 15<sup>th</sup> – Final 2004 Crop Reporting Date

July 23<sup>rd</sup> – Final Date to Enroll in GRP

September 3<sup>rd</sup> – Final Day to return COC Election Nominations

September 30<sup>th</sup> – Final Date to report 2004 Changes

September 30<sup>th</sup> – Final Day to Enroll Farms into the DCP Farm Program

### On the World Wide Web:

USDA Washington Office  
[www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)

FSA Washington Office  
[www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)

FSA Outreach  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/outreach](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/outreach)

Texas State FSA Office  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/tx](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/tx)

Hartley FSA  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/tx/tx205](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/tx/tx205)



## ***Source Water Protection***

The Farm Service Agency and the nonprofit National Rural Water Association have launched a two-year program in 33 states aimed at the prevention of source water pollution. The Source Water Protection Program will identify practices that farmers can voluntarily employ to promote cleaner water.

Source water includes surface and ground water used by rural residents.

With the assistance and oversight of FSA and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the NRWA will initiate the program in the Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin.

FSA and NRWA establish local teams to develop plans to keep their source water safe and clean. Voluntary practices include proper location of animal waste lagoons, proper storage of pesticides and safe management of other agricultural materials. Citizens from federal, state, local and private entities can serve on the local source water protection teams.

### ***Managed CRP Haying & Grazing***

Managed haying and grazing are allowed on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land, but restrictions apply. Managed haying and grazing cannot occur:

- on acreage hayed or grazed under managed or emergency provisions within the previous two years, or
- during the primary nesting and brood rearing season.

Haying is approved in Texas July 2<sup>nd</sup> through September 29<sup>th</sup> and grazing is approved beginning July 2<sup>nd</sup> and ending October 29, 2004. Additionally, a 25% payment reduction will be assessed to acres hayed and grazed under this program.

### ***CRP Cover Maintenance***

You are required to maintain your Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres according to the conservation plan you agreed to with NRCS. You need to make sure you:

- Have adequate approved vegetative cover to control erosion for the contract period
- Control weeds and other types of undesirable vegetation
- Take control measures outside of the primary nesting season

Keep in mind that mowing for cosmetic purposes is prohibited. Review your conservation plan and talk to NRCS if you think undesirable plant species are invading your CRP land.

### ***DCP Sign-Up Continues***

If you are one of the few producers who did not sign up for the Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP), you still have time. September 30, 2004 is the final date to apply for the 2004 program; however it will cost you \$100 per farm.

## ***Report Changes by September 30***

Producers enrolled in DCP who transfer the land to another producer within the current fiscal year (October 1, 2003 through September 30, 2004) must notify our office of the change immediately.

A contract update is also required for a change of shares, or if a new producer is being added to or removed from a contract. All producers affected by the contract revision must sign form CCC-509 and agree to the requirements of the contract.

Failure to report changes may result in ineligibility for DCP payments for the appropriate year.

### ***eGov***

In an effort to better serve its customers, the USDA has begun the implementation of the USDA eGovernment Program. This online internet service will allow farmers and ranchers to have access to their records 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Currently, the *USDA's Customer Statement* and filing of *eForms* is available for authorized users of the system, however; it is anticipated that many more services will become available in the near future.

Enclosed is a brochure describing how to gain access to the online system which we hope you will find useful in requesting access to the system. If you have any other questions, please let us know.

### ***Removing CCC Loan Collateral***

If you have grain pledged as collateral for a Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) loan, that grain cannot be removed without prior authorization or repayment. Unauthorized removal, which includes removal for cleaning, for seed or planting is considered a violation and is subject to penalty.

Commodity loans are subject to spot check. Determined shortages must be repaid with principal plus interest. Additional penalties plus loss of future loan eligibility may apply.

Producers planning to remove or clean CCC loan grain should contact the county office staff for additional information.

### ***Foreign Landowner Notification***

Foreign investors, who buy, sell or hold a direct or indirect interest in U.S. agricultural land must report their holdings and transactions to the Secretary of Agriculture. Failure to timely file an accurate report can result in a penalty with fines up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the agricultural land. Contact your local FSA office to file the appropriate report.

If you have any questions about this newsletter or any FSA program, please come by this office or call us at (806) 365-4453 extension 2.