

April 2018



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Washington State FSA Newsletter

Washington State Farm Service Agency

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State Committee:
Melanie Wyss, Chair
Jesus Limon, Member
Robyn Meenach, Member

Loss Adjusters Needed – Earn Extra Spending Money

The Farm Service Agency is seeking individuals interested in contracting their service as loss adjusters. FSA relies on loss adjusters for visiting farm fields and documenting crop losses for the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Program and the Tree Assistance Program.

FSA pays certified loss adjusters an hourly wage plus travel expenses. FSA also provides training and pays for training time to achieve certification. Loss adjusters must be familiar with agriculture and be willing to travel. Services are contracted on an as-need basis.

The need for loss adjusters is greatest in central Washington but FSA is accepting applications throughout the state. If you are interested in becoming an FSA-certified loss adjuster or would like more information about this financial opportunity, contact Dawn

Maureen Harkcom, Member
Bruce Nelson, Member

Scott, FSA Program Specialist at (509) 323-3017 or
dawn.scott@wa.usda.gov.

To find contact information for
your local office go to
www.fsa.usda.gov/wa

The Farm Service Agency is Hiring

The Farm Service Agency is seeking qualified applicants interested in a paid training position, with the long term goal of being a Farm Loan Officer in Washington state. FSA is hiring a Farm Loan Officer Trainee (FLOT), which will be headquartered in Yakima. The application closing date is **April 5, 2018**.

This position is open externally to the public. The two announcements below are for the same position but different grade levels. The agency assigns grade levels based on experience so it is highly recommended to apply for both positions, not knowing how the ranking will affect the results.

FSA is looking for qualified applicants who are interested in living in rural communities and assisting farmers and ranchers. Bilingual proficiency in English and Spanish is preferred but not required. Vacancies with FSA are posted on the USAJobs [website](http://www.usajobs.gov).
www.usajobs.gov

The links for the announcements are located below. An online resume, built on the USAJobs website, and an online application will be necessary for applying for the position.

<https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/494750600>

<https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/494751400>

The following video will allow interested parties to hear employees talk about what it is like to work for FSA in Washington state: <https://vimeo.com/182866334>

For more information about this position, contact Mitzi Stephens at the FSA State Office at mitzi.stephens@wa.usda.gov or (509) 323-3007.

County Committee Nominations – Beat the Rush

Every spring, FSA gears up for the county committee election process. This is about the time farm work completely takes over your life. If you are interested in being a nominee, or just want to know more about county committees, contact your [county FSA office](#) now. Don't wait until you are too busy.

The election of responsible agricultural producers to FSA county committees is important to all farmers and ranchers with large or small operations. Committee members are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level.

Farmers who serve on committees help decide the kind of programs their counties will offer. They work to make FSA agricultural programs serve the needs of local producers.

FSA will provide more information about the 2018 county committee election as the election cycle commences. Start thinking about it now.

Keeping the Lines of Communication Open with Your Lender

Inevitably, opportunities or setbacks will come up that you don't anticipate while farming. If you have a loan and you have changes in your operation that might affect your farm business plan, you will need to discuss them with your lender, whether an FSA Farm Loan Officer, or other lender. Some situational changes you would want to discuss include:

- Renting more or fewer acres
- Trading, buying, or leasing equipment
- Increasing breeding herd (keeping rather than selling heifers/gilts/ewes, etc.)
- Impact of adverse weather (delayed planting or harvest, hail or frost, or death or injury to livestock)
- Significant, unplanned expenses or income
- Reduction in non-farm income

There could also be nonfinancial changes that would affect your operation that you should discuss with FSA that may include:

- Formation or dissolution of a business organization (Partnership, corporation, LLC etc.)
- Divorce
- Serious illness or death of a spouse or other key person
- Property changes beyond your control.

If you are an FSA borrower and experience any of the situations above, please speak with your FSA Farm Loan officer as soon as possible to see if you need assistance with your loan.

Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires Federal agencies to consider all potential environmental impacts for federally-funded projects before the project is approved.

For all Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs, an environmental review must be completed before actions are approved, such as site preparation or ground disturbance. These programs include, but are not limited to, the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program and farm loans. If project implementation begins before FSA has completed an environmental review, this will result in a denial of the request. There are exceptions regarding the Stafford Act and emergencies. It is important to wait until you receive written approval of your project proposal before starting any actions, including, but not limited to, vegetation clearing, site preparation or ground disturbance.

Remember to contact your local FSA office early in your planning process to determine what level of environmental review is required for your program application so that it can be completed timely.

Applications cannot be approved contingent upon the completion of an environmental review. FSA must have copies of all permits and plans before an application can be approved. If you have questions, contact your [county FSA office](#).

Breaking New Ground

Agricultural producers are reminded to consult with FSA and NRCS before breaking out new ground for production purposes as doing so without prior authorization may put your federal farm program benefits in jeopardy. This is especially true for land that must meet Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions.

Producers with HEL determined soils are required to apply tillage, crop residue and rotational requirements as specified in your conservation plan.

Notify FSA as a first point of contact prior to conducting land clearing or drainage type projects to ensure the proposed actions meet compliance criteria such as clearing any trees to create new cropland. These areas will need to be reviewed to ensure such work will not risk your eligibility for benefits.

Complete form AD-1026 - Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification to identify the proposed action and allow FSA to determine whether a referral to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for further review is necessary. If you have questions, contact your [county FSA office](#).

Transitioning Expiring CRP Land to Beginning, Veteran or Underserved Farmers and Ranchers

Retired, or retiring landowners or operators, are encouraged to transition their Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres to beginning, veteran or underserved farmers or ranchers through the Transition Incentives Program (TIP). TIP provides annual rental payments to the retiring farmer for up to two additional years after the CRP contract expires, provided the transition is not to a family member.

Enrollment in TIP is on a continuous basis. Beginning, veteran or underserved farmers and ranchers and retiring CRP participants may enroll in TIP beginning one year before the expiration date of the CRP contract or August 15. For example, if a CRP contract is scheduled to expire on September 30, 2018, the land may be offered for enrollment in TIP through **August 15, 2018**. The August deadline allows the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) time to complete the TIP sustainable grazing or crop production conservation plans. The TIP application must be submitted prior to completing the lease or sale of the affected lands.

New landowners or renters must return the land to production using sustainable grazing or farming methods.

For more information on TIP, visit <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation>.

Important Dates and Deadlines

May 28, 2018 – Memorial Day. USDA service centers will be closed.

May 31, 2018 – Final date to request a 2017 crop Marketing Assistance Loan (MAL) for corn, dry peas, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, rice, safflower seed, chickpeas, soybeans, and sunflower seeds.

April 1- July 1, 2018 – Primary nesting season. During this time, prior approval from the county committee is required before spot-treating weeds by mowing, burning or spraying after a CRP stand is established.

For previous issues of the FSA Washington newsletter and a list of annual program **reminders**, check the [newsletter page](#) on the FSA Washington website.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).