

APRIL 2009

Fallon County FSA Office
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County Committee Members

Maralee Burdick, Chair
Brian Rustad, Vice Chair
Robert Wenz, Regular Member

FSA Office Personnel

Maria L. Braun, CED - Ext. 102
Kay Varner, PT - Ext. 104
Sonja Wiseman, PT - Ext. 100
Ray Allardings, Field - Ext. 108
Sharon Gookin – Temp – Ext. 106
Robin Markuson – Farm Loan Officer
(406) 775-6359 Ext. 110

Dates to Remember:

April 20&21 – Montana Environthon – Lewistown, MT
May 1 – Fallon County NAP Pull-Off Date on forage acres
May 14 – CRP Spring Grazing Period Ends – All livestock must be removed
May 15-Aug. 1 – Primary nesting season
May 18 – Buy-In Waiver Deadline – SURE, TAP, ELAP Disaster Programs
May 25 – Memorial Day, Office Closed
May 31 – Final loan/LDP availability date for Corn, Dry peas, Grain sorghum, Lentils, Mustard seed, Safflower seed, Small chickpeas, Soybeans, and Sunflower seed harvested in 2008
June 1 – Last day to plant spring seeded crops except Millet, Buckwheat and Sorghum – June 12th for those crops for NAP coverage. Contact your insurance agent for the dates for MPCII Crops.
June 1 – Deadline to sign up for DCP,
June 15-17 – Montana Range days – Miles City, MT
July 15 – Acreage Reporting Deadline

Fallon County FSA

Changes to Your Farming Operation

To ensure a smooth transition when implementing the new programs, FSA requests that producers notify the County office of any changes to your farming operation including land ownership or lease changes, entity changes including members and shares, and who is authorized to sign documents for the operation or individuals. There are policy changes and new forms to complete when new programs are implemented and contacting the FSA office with any operation changes will greatly assist the county office.

Also, the Improper Payments Information Act of 2002 (IPEA) implemented stronger internal controls and reviews of payments issued. **The FSA database of payments issued will be compared against the Social Security Administration (SSA) database of deceased individuals.** It is very important that FSA be notified of the death of a landowner, member of an entity, or anyone that may be earning USDA benefits. There are actions that can be taken to ensure payments are issued correctly and not considered an overpayment. Contact your local office for more information.

IF YOU HAVE CHANGES IN YOUR OPERATION, REPORT THE CHANGES TO THE FSA OFFICE IMMEDIATELY. THANK YOU!

2009 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) Signup

Sign up for the 2009 DCP program for farms with base acres began Dec. 22, 2008. Signup will continue until June 1, 2009. Farms may not be enrolled after June 1 of the applicable contract period. There are no late filed provisions for contract years 2009-2012. In addition to certain commodities, specific pulse crops have been added as an eligible commodity for the 2009 crop year for counter-cyclical payments only. A producer with the sum of the base acreage on the farm with 10 acres or less must be a socially disadvantaged or limited resource farmer or rancher to be eligible for DCP payments.

Ensure Benefits Are Received in a Timely Manner

To ensure USDA program benefits are received in a timely manner, please ensure you are consistent in the way you are presenting your operation to all USDA agencies including NRCS, Risk Management Agency (RMA), FSA and any other USDA agency programs you may partake in. For example, if you have signed up for program benefits with FSA as Joe Farmer, please sign up with NRCS as Joe Farmer. This will ensure Joe Farmer has completed all program paperwork and is eligible to receive payments. Also, if you change your financial accounts please contact the office so the payments are going to the correct account. Contact your county office if you have questions.

Fallon County Winter Wheat Producers!!

Are you thinking of reseeding Winter Wheat to another crop? Please contact the FSA office immediately. New procedure requires a Notice of Loss for those affected acres. If you have federal crop loss adjustment documentation, please bring that in also. If you have questions please call the office immediately at 778-2238 Ext. 2. Thank you

Prevented Planting Crop Reports for 2009

It is often difficult for the FSA County Committee or FSA State Committee to make a determination that a producer with a claim for prevented planting was prevented from planting because of a natural disaster, or if the producer made a management decision not to plant. This is particularly true when drought is listed as the reason that the producer did not plant the crop.

The State Committee feels that a producer not planting because of drought conditions is making a management decision and was not prevented from getting into the field and planting the crop. The State Committee determined that drought is not an eligible cause of prevented planting for 2006 and future crop years. This determination applies only to crop acreage reporting for prevented planting acreage credit. A CCC-576 is required to be filed for both prevented planting and failed acreage credit. Contact the County office with any questions at 778-2238 Ext. 2.

Removing CCC Loan Collateral

Producers are reminded, if you have grain under Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) loan it cannot be removed or disposed of **without prior FSA county office staff authorization or repayment**. The county office staff may issue release authorizations based on a telephone or in person request when you are ready to move the grain. A loan violation is subject to monetary and administrative penalties, such as repaying the loan at principal plus interest, liquidated damages, calling the loan and denial of future farm-stored loans and loan deficiency payments.

All commodity loans are subject to spot check. Locking in a market loan repayment rate is not a marketing authorization. If you are planning to move CCC loan grain, contact the county office staff for additional information.

Montana Envirothon

The Montana Envirothon will be held April 20 & 21st, 2009 in Lewistown. The Envirothon assists high school age students learn more about five different natural resource areas. This program is sponsored by the Montana Association of Conservation Districts and cooperating agencies. Five-member teams made up of students from the same school enrolled in grades 9-12 compete locally and regionally with the winning team advancing to the state competition. Sponsorship is available through your local conservation district. For more information logon to the Montana Envirothon website at www.montanaenvirothon.org or contact Shonny Nordlund in Lewistown at (406) 538-7401 Ext. 101.

Conservation Compliance

Federal regulations discourage the production of crops on highly erodible cropland unless the land is protected from erosion by an approved conservation system. Status reviews are conducted to ensure producers follow a conservation plan on highly erodible land.

In addition to the highly erodible land, a person may not plant an agricultural commodity on wetland converted after Dec. 23, 1985, or convert a wetland to make agricultural production possible after Nov. 28, 1990.

Failure to comply with these provisions will cause a person to be ineligible for USDA benefits. County Committees may review noncompliance situations for good faith and provide relief in approved cases.

Spring Grazing on Conservation Reserve Program Acres

The 2009 grazing period for managed grazing of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres is March 15th through May 14th. CRP participants who want to graze their CRP contracts this spring must sign up at the office.

Grazing cannot begin until the participant (s) receives written approval from the local FSA county committee or its designee. Spring managed grazing must end before May 15th, which is the start of Montana's Primary Nesting and Broodrearing Season.

Participants may graze CRP acres based on the rotation period (once every three years or once every 5 years) and other limitations that are included in their Conservation Plan of Operations. Producers wishing to graze CRP acres must first receive written notification of approval from the FSA county committee before managed grazing can begin. Livestock producers, who rent or lease acreage from the CRP participant, shall sign a statement agreeing not to sublease the CRP acreage and receive notification of approval from the FSA county committee, a copy of which they should provide to the CRP participant. All livestock must be removed from the CRP acreage when the calculated AUM's are utilized, but no later than May 14th for spring grazing. CRP participants will be assessed a payment reduction for managed grazing which is calculated by taking the number of acres grazed, times the CRP per acre annual rental payment, times 25 percent.

Managed grazing *and* managed haying of CRP will be allowed in 2009, however, a starting date for the summer/fall managed grazing *and* managed haying for CRP will be announced later.



HAPPY EASTER!! HAPPY SPRING!!

HAPPY EVERYTHING!

Pulse Crop Bases

Although signup dates have yet to be announced, detailed ACRE information has been posted on the Montana FSA website www.fsa.usda.gov/mt and clicking on “Hot Links” “2008 Farm Bill”, including a Fact Sheet, ACRE background information, 2009 State Benchmark yields, and preliminary price guarantees. Many State extension and producer groups have also created decision tools to assist producers in evaluating whether ACRE is an option for your operation. Producers may do an Internet search to find some of the decision tools. ACRE decision tools may be found at the following sites. FSA does not endorse any specific site. Signup dates for ACRE election are expected to be announced soon.

www.montana.edu/softwaredownloads/ www.mgga.org/FarmPolicy/farmpolicy.html or www.ag.ndsu.nodak.edu/aginfo/farmmgmt/docs/ACRE_Analyzer.xls or www.card.iastate.edu/ag_risk_tools/acre/ www.fapri.missouri.edu/

The 2008 Farm Bill provided producers an option to establish base acres and yields for pulse crops on their 2009 farm. Pulse crops are defined as dry peas, lentils, Kabuli garbanzo beans (large chickpeas), and Desi garbanzo beans (small chickpeas). FSA will use the planting history from 1998-2001 and is in the process of researching pulse crop acreage reported to the Agency during those crop years. The yield will be established at 75% of the county average unless producers elect to update the yield by providing acceptable production evidence for those crop years. Owners and operators of farms with history will receive a letter and summary of the acreage history in the near future. They will be asked to verify the accuracy of the acreage and be given additional information on the option to update yields. Please contact the FSA if you have questions or concerns at 778-2238 Ext. 2.

2009 Crop Certification Process

Map Packets for crop certification will be mailed the 1st full week of April. After you have received your map packet, please follow the enclosed instructions and return the maps to the office as soon as possible. Your map information will be loaded into the system and an appointment will be set up for you to review and sign your 2009 Crop Certifications. Certification is mandatory if any of the following apply:

- ◆ You receive DCP payments
- ◆ You have acres enrolled in CRP
- ◆ Loans or LDP's will be requested; including Wool, Mohair and Honey
- ◆ Acreage is covered by NAP

Failure to report accurately may result in loss of program and price support benefits. For Noninsured Assistance Program (NAP) crops, which are disaster-affected prior to July 15, an acreage report must be on file before a Notice of Loss (FSA-576), can be accepted. The CCC-576 must be filed within 15 days of the disaster or 15 days after the loss becomes apparent. NAP honey reports shall be filed by January 2 or 30 days after the hives are put out. The deadline for crop certification is July 15th, however, we would like to get the maps completed as soon as possible. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the office. If you would like your maps before the mailing, please stop by the office and pick them up.



RECONSTITUTION DEADLINE

August 1 is the reconstitution deadline for all farm reconstitutions.

United States Department of Agriculture
Fallon County Farm Service Agency
PO Box 1516
Baker MT 59313-1516

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Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)

The 2008 Farm Bill created several new disaster programs under the title “Supplemental Agricultural Disaster Assistance”. One of the programs created is the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP). This program compensates producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather that occurred on or after January 1, 2008 and before October 1, 2011. No State, county or other trigger will be used to define an eligible LIP area. **Signup:** Signup will begin when an eligible disaster is apparent. A notice of loss must be filed within 30 days of when the loss is apparent. **Eligible Adverse Weather Events:** Wildfire – must be related to an adverse weather event, **Blizzard**, Tornado, Lightning, Ice Storms, Earthquakes, Flooding, Extreme Cold, Extreme Heat, Disease – must be related to or exacerbated by an eligible, adverse weather event to be an eligible cause of livestock deaths under LIP. **NOTE:** Drought is **not** an eligible adverse weather event except when associated with anthrax, a condition that occurs because of drought and results in the death of eligible livestock. **Eligible Livestock:** Adult/non-adult beef cattle, Adult/non-adult dairy cattle, Adult/non-adult buffalo and beefalo, Equine maintained for commercial use as part of the farming operation, Elk, Reindeer, Deer, Sheep, Alpacas, Emus, Swine, Goats, Llamas, Poultry. Eligible livestock includes all types and weight ranges. The eligible livestock must have died in the calendar year for which benefits are being requested. All eligible livestock must be maintained for commercial use as part of the farming operation. Eligible livestock must be owned by an eligible livestock owner on the day the livestock died. **Applying for LIP:** Notice of loss must be filed 30

days after the loss is apparent, Proof of death of livestock must be provided and may include but is not limited to, any or a combination of the following: 1. rendering truck receipts or certificates 2. national guard receipts of carcass removal 3. veterinary records 4. tax assessor records 5. private insurance documents 6. a measurement service may be requested by the producer and completed by FSA. Documentation must provide sufficient data that identifies: 1. kind/type/weight range of livestock 2. number of livestock Third party certification may be accepted only when participant certifies in writing that no other form of proof of death is available and includes the number and physical location of livestock in inventory at time death occurs. Documentation must also be provided to support the number of livestock in inventory at the time the deaths occurred. The third party providing the certification must be a reliable source in a position to have knowledge of the dead livestock and shall not be: 1. Affiliated with the operation such as a hired hand, etc. 2. A family member. **Payment:** LIP payments to eligible livestock producers will be based on: 75 percent of a fair market value, as determined by the Secretary, for each specific livestock category; Individual producers’ eligible losses. Calculations will be performed separately by eligible livestock (by type, kind, and weight range) and producer type. **Payment and Limitation:** LIP will pay up to \$100,000 annually including any benefits received from SURE, LFP, & ELAP. **Adjusted Gross Income (AGI):** 2008 – \$2.5 Million 2009 and future years - \$500,000 Non-Farm AGI (Persons or legal entities that have an average adjusted gross nonfarm income that exceeds \$500,000, are not eligible for LIP. **Definitions:** Normal Mortality Rate: The normal mortality rate is the percentage of livestock, that can be expected to die normally in a livestock operation, during the calendar year, as a result of disease, injury, or other causes that can routinely occur using good livestock handling practices. The normal mortality rate is established by the FSA State Committee in concurrence with state livestock organizations, extension service, and other knowledgeable and credible sources for each type of livestock. **For Additional Information** please contact your local FSA office or view on the Montana FSA Web site at www.fsa.usda.gov/mt/.