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**Inside this Issue**

- Page 1 LFP/ELAP Signup Deadline  
Dec 7 -COC Ballots Returned  
– Guaranteed Loan Limits  
Raised**  
**Page 2 RD Rural Energy for America**  
**Page 3 Financial Management  
Workshops**  
**Page 4 FSA Implements New  
Payment Process**



**Reasonable Accommodation Statement:**

"Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in any FSA programs should contact Virginia Nollmeyer, CED, PO Box 6, Forsyth, MT 59327 at 406-346-7333 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339."



Rosebud/Treasure FSA News  
November 2009

**Deadline for Calendar Year 2008 Losses for LFP and ELAP**

2008 Calendar year losses for the Livestock Forage Program (LFP) and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) must be filed by December 10, 2009. For 2009 and subsequent years signup, applications must be filed no later than 30 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the losses occurred. The losses must occur in the calendar year for which the application is being filed.

For both programs, producers must have suffered losses that occurred on or after January 1, 2008, and before October 1, 2011. Producers are also required to meet a Risk Management Purchase Requirement in order to be eligible for these programs. Producers must have timely applied for and obtained either crop insurance; or Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance (NAP) coverage or 2008 Buy-in for 2008 calendar year losses.

Eligible livestock list is available at [www.fsa.usda.gov/mt](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt).

**COC Ballots Must be Returned to County Office by Dec 7**

FSA will mail County Committee Election ballots to producers beginning Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>. The voted ballots are due back to the local county office either via mail or in person by Dec. 7, 2009. Please contact the office for further questions or details.

**2010 DCP and ACRE Signup Begins**

Signup for the 2010 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) and the Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program has begun and will continue through June 1, 2010. No late-filed applications will be accepted.

DCP payments are computed using base acres and payment yields established for each farm. For 2010, eligible producers may request to receive advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment. Advance direct payments will be issued beginning Dec. 1, 2009.

The optional ACRE Program provides a safety net based on state revenue losses and acts in place of the price-based safety net of counter-cyclical payments under DCP. A farm's payment is based on a revenue guarantee calculated using a 5-year state yield and the most recent 2-year national price for each eligible commodity. For the 2010 crop, the 2-year price average will be based on the 2008 and 2009 crop years. The decision to enroll in ACRE is irrevocable. The owner of the farm and all producers on the farm must agree to enroll in ACRE. Once enrolled, the farm shall be enrolled for that initial crop year and will remain in ACRE through the 2012 crop year.

"The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its program and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."

## Rural Energy for America Program Available in Montana

By Matthew J. Jones – RD State Director



The cost of energy – it's not an uncommon topic these days whether you're talking gas and diesel for your vehicle, propane and natural gas for your heating, or electricity to power everything else. Energy considerations factor into our daily lives, and in today's economic conditions the cost of that energy can be the difference between profit and loss for a small business or agricultural producer.

The 2008 Farm Bill included several provisions specifically addressing energy efficiency and renewable energy. Rural Development, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is administering several of the programs that evolved from the provisions spelled out by Congress.

The Rural Energy for America Program, or REAP, is the primary program offered by Rural Development to address energy efficiency and renewable energy for small business owners and agricultural producers in rural communities. The program provides grants and loan guarantees for qualified projects that either increase a business's energy efficiency or replace traditional energy sources with renewable energy.

Under REAP, small business owners and agricultural producers who live outside the city limits of Billings, Missoula, and Great Falls are eligible. Rural Development can provide a federal grant for up to 25% of the total project cost, and provide a loan guarantee for an additional 50% of the project cost. Projects under \$20,000 are given special priority.

At the end of September, Rural Development awarded three Montana projects a total of \$76,202 in federal grants and they serve as prime examples of the types of projects being sought for funding by REAP:

- With a grant of \$11,202, a farm near Manhattan purchased a variable frequency drive irrigation pump for their pivots that adjusts the amount of power consumed depending on how much force is needed to maintain the necessary water pressure for running the pivot arms. This saves electricity, and reduces input costs for the producer.
- Receiving a grant of \$15,000, a grain producer near Fort Benton purchased a small-scale wind turbine to provide the power necessary to operate the grain cleaner, alleviating the need to purchase that power from the electric company and reducing the cost of production.
- A business owner south of Drummond received a grant for \$50,000. The business produces wood shavings used for animal bedding, and will use the excess sawdust and splinters from the shaving process to fire a biomass heater that will then reduce the moisture content of the shavings they produce, making them more absorbent. This biomass heater will replace all of the propane previously used to dry the product.

Applications are being accepted now for funding over the next fiscal year; interested business owners and producers are encouraged to call their nearest USDA Rural Development office or visit us at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt>.

Energy costs have a serious impact on the bottom line of a business, and steps taken now can pay dividends well into the future by reducing our dependence on foreign energy, reducing our impact on the environment, and reducing the cost of doing business. USDA Rural Development can help.

*Matthew Jones is the Montana State Director for USDA Rural Development, and is based in Bozeman. He was appointed in July 2009 by the Obama Administration to manage Rural Development's operations within Montana. Jones was born and raised in Billings, and is a graduate of the University of Montana, Missoula and Georgetown University Law Center.*

### Agricultural Financial and Production Management Workshops to be Held

FSA, in conjunction with Montana State University (MSU) Extension Service have begun conducting Financial and Production Management training.

The cost of the training is \$100.00 for the six week training. A registration fee of \$20.00 will be charged for anyone interested in attending a single session.

This continuing education class is available to anyone interested in learning more about managing their operation. This course also meets the requirements for production and financial management training for FSA loan recipients. In order to qualify for a certificate, all six sessions must be attended. Participants will be asked to pay a registration fee to cover the cost of the video conferencing at the first session they attend. Contact the location of your choice for further information. Workshop locations are:

Location	Phone
Phillips County Extension Service	654-2543
Blaine Co. Extension Service	357-3200
Fort Belknap Extension Service	353-2205, ext. 484
Little Big Horn College, Contact - Fredrica Lefthand	638-3131
Great Falls USDA Service Center	727-7580 ext. 2
Blackfeet Community College, contact-Terry Tatsey	338-5441 ext 760
Ekalaka USDA Service Center	775-6359 ext. 2
Miles City USDA Service Center	232-7905 ext. 2
Choteau, MT USDA Service Center	466-5351 ext. 2
Lewistown USDA Service Center	538-3489 ext. 2
Dillon USDA Service Center	683-3830 ext. 2
Ronan USDA Service Center	676-2811 ext. 2
Fort Peck Community College, Contact -Tom Black Eagle	768-6300
Bozeman USDA Service Center	522-4000 ext. 2

### Financial Workshop Locations (cont.)

Location	Phone Contact
Culbertson USDA Service Center	787-6262, ext. 2
Sidney USDA Service Center	433-2103 ext. 108
Glendive USDA Service Center	377-5566 ext. 2
Billings (location to be determined)	657-6135 ext.100

The sessions will be held from 10:00 a.m. to noon and 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. The sessions are as follows:

Date	Topic	Instructor
11/02	Family Business Issues/Tools for Estate Planning	George Haynes/ Marsha Goetting, MSU
11/09	Production Records/Financial Analysis I <b>(Production Records Session will discuss mandatory and adequate recordkeeping for FSA and other government livestock and crop programs)</b>	Marty Frick/ Duane Griffith/George Haynes, MSU
11/23	Crop & Livestock Marketing/Risk Management	Gary Brester/ Duane Griffith/George Haynes, MSU
11/30	Retirement Planning	Joel Schumacher, MSU
1/11	Intro. & Advanced Quicken	Duane Griffith, MSU

### Farm Loan Guaranteed Loan Amount Raised

The loan limit for FSA Farm Loan Guaranteed Loan Program has been increased to \$1,112,000. The limit is adjusted annually based on the "Prices Paid to Farmers Index" compiled by the national Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). Participating lenders can use the Guaranteed Loan Program to strengthen a loan's viability through a guarantee of up to 95 percent of the loan amount. Farmers interested in guaranteed loans should apply through a conventional lender.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Important Dates to Remember</u></b></p> <p><b>Nov 6 – COC Ballots Mailed</b> <b>Nov 9 – Financial Management Workshop - Production Records</b> <b>Nov 11 – Office Closed – Veteran’s Day</b> <b>Nov 26 -Office Closed – Happy Thanksgiving</b> <b>Dec 1 – NAP application closing date for 2010 honey</b> <b>Dec. 10 – Deadline for LFP and ELAP 2008 calendar year losses</b> <b>Dec 10 – COC Meeting – Count Ballots Rosebud Cnty</b> <b>Dec 14 – COC Meeting - Count Ballots Treasure Cnty</b> <b>Dec 25 – Office Closed – Merry Christmas</b> <b>Jan 1 – Office Closed – Happy New Year 2010</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>New District Director in District 6.</u></b></p> <p>We would like to welcome Heidi Brewer as our new District 6 Director. Heidi joins us from the FSA State Office in Bozeman.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Have a Safe and Happy Holiday Season</i></b> <i>Virginia, Sharolyn, Diane, Deb, Christy &amp; Dee</i></p>
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## FSA Implements New Payment Process for CRP and DCP Payments

FSA implemented a new centralized payment processing system in October. Payment transaction statements are being mailed to producers for annual Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) payments, final direct payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) and Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program. FSA encourages producers to keep the payment transaction statements they receive as they will be needed for tax purposes and reconciling the FSA-1099s issued in January.

Since FSA payments are now centralized for the nation, payment reductions for advance DCP payments received or haying and grazing of CRP will be offset from the first available payment without regard to contract number, farm number, program, or administrative county. Payments will be reduced for:

- existing FSA/CCC debt
- advance direct payments under DCP or ACRE
- payment reductions for haying and grazing of CRP
- eligibility determinations implemented with the 2008 Farm Bill (such as direct attribution, member contribution of labor and management)

If an offset is taken for one of these items, it will appear on the payment transaction statement as a payment reduction to “Commodity Credit Corporation” but may not clearly state which program, farm number, contract number, or county.

There are some known software issues with entity payments, such as a corporation or LLC, due to changes in the 2008 Farm Bill that required member contribution of labor or management. FSA is working hard to resolve the issues and doing their best to ensure delays are minimized with the new system. Some entities may initially receive a partial payment with the balance to be issued as soon as the software issues are resolved. Questions regarding Treasury offsets may be directed to the Treasury Offset Program (TOP) Call Center at 1-800-304-3107.

Payments are also being routed to the Department of Treasury to comply with the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996. The Department of Treasury will notify the payment recipient of any offset taken for other delinquent Federal debt.