

December 2009

Sheridan Co. FSA Office  
119 N. Jackson  
Plentywood, MT 59254  
406-765-1550, ext. 2

#### **County Committee**

|                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Gordon French   | Chairman      |
| Kevin Wilson    | Vice Chairman |
| Jody Lagerquist | Member        |
| Ellen Sedgwick  | Advisor       |

#### **FSA Office Personnel**

|                  |               |
|------------------|---------------|
| Donna Hilyard    | CED, ext. 102 |
| Donelda Buckalew | PT, ext. 105  |
| Karen Budd       | PT, ext. 104  |
| Kathy Gray       | PT, ext. 100  |
| Josie Johnson    | PT, ext. 109  |
| Marcia Rice      | PT, ext. 112  |
| Michael Sandoval | PT, ext. 110  |

#### **Farm Loan personnel for Sheridan Co:**

Pat Turner, Loan Manager  
Bruce Johnson, Loan Officer  
Patti McGinnis, Farm Loan Program  
Technician  
Contact them at Richland Co.,  
406-433-2103, ext. 108

#### **Dates to Remember:**

**Dec. 7** – Final day to return COC election ballots

**Dec. 10** – Deadline to sign up for LFP for 2008 calendar year grazing losses

**Dec. 25** – Office closed in observance of Christmas Day

**Jan. 1** – Office closed in observance of New Year's Day

**Jan. 18** – Office closed in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day

**Feb. 15** – Office closed in observance of Presidents' Day

**Jan. 31:** Deadline to apply for loan/LDP on 2009 clip wool, mohair.

**Mar. 15:** Deadline for NAP coverage for '10 crops  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday every month** – County Committee meetings.



# Sheridan County FSA News

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

**December 10, 2009 is the deadline** to sign up for 2008 Calendar year losses for the Livestock Forage Program (LFP) and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP). **Please call now for an appointment!** For LFP, please provide proof of your livestock inventory as of March 2 through April 30, 2008. If we use your property tax record as a starting point, and your livestock numbers are different than that for the period 3/2/08 through 4/30/08, you need to provide documentation that proves the correct number. This can include preg check records, Bangs vaccination records, bull tests, livestock sales or purchases, etc. Also provide a copy of your 2008 rangeland insurance policy and the associated insurance acreage report. Any leases must be put in writing and submitted if you want to use those acres on your application. **ALL forms must be signed and ALL supporting documentation must be filed by 12/10/09!**

If you lease pasture and you want to claim it on your LFP application, you'll need to provide written documentation of the lease, even if it's been a verbal lease. Please provide a legal description of the leased land, and indicate the time frame covered by the agreement (is it a specific number of years or on-going; when was it entered into). You'll need to identify if the lease is on a set dollar per acre basis (you pay a certain amount every year no matter how many head graze, or if you even use those acres), or if it's on a \$/AUM basis. If it is an AUM lease, you'll need to note who is doing the improvements/maintenance (fences, water, roads, etc.) on the acres, who is paying for the improvements/maintenance, and what you would agree the shares are on those acres. In an AUM lease, the landowner will always have a risk of loss – if you don't get to graze due to drought, he is out money – so you have to agree on shares. The agreement will need to be signed and dated by both parties. The shares agreed to need to be representative of the risk each party has. The County Committee will need to review leases for fair representation of each party's risk in the lease agreement.

In order for an LFP or ELAP applicant to qualify for program benefits, the applicant must have timely obtained Crop Insurance, FSA's Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, or 2008 Buy-in for 2008 calendar year losses. For potential LFP benefits in 2010, producers need to purchase crop insurance PRF-Rainfall Index grazing insurance by November 30, 2009, or purchase NAP coverage for grazing by March 15, 2010. Producers who meet the requirements of a socially disadvantaged, limited resource, or beginning farmer/rancher, are not required to purchase crop insurance or have NAP coverage.

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**LFP and ELAP (cont.)**

LFP provides financial assistance to eligible livestock producers who had grazing losses due to qualifying drought or fire. For drought, the losses must have occurred on land that is native range or improved pasture, or a crop planted specifically for grazing for covered livestock during the normal grazing period for the county. For fire, LFP provides payments to eligible producers that suffered grazing losses on rangeland managed by a federal agency.

ELAP provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock and honeybees that have losses due to disease, adverse weather or other conditions, including losses due to blizzards and wildfires. ELAP assistance is for losses not covered under LFP, the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), and the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE). ELAP is being implemented to fill in the gap and provide assistance under other conditions determined to be appropriate.

For 2008 calendar year losses, applications must be filed by Dec. 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. Losses must occur in the calendar year the application is being filed for.



**Election Ballot Deadline Dec 7**

FSA mailed County Committee Election ballots to producers whose principal farming operation is in Local Administrative Area (LAA) 1 (Townships 36 and 37, generally north of Highway 5) early in November. The voted ballots are due back to the FSA office either via mail or in person by Dec. 7, 2009. Eligible voters in Area 1 who did not receive a ballot should contact the FSA office. Kevin Wilson currently represents LAA 1. You can vote for the candidate on the ballot, or write in the name of someone who farms in Area 1 and who would be willing to serve on the FSA County Committee if elected.

**2010 DCP and ACRE Signup**

We are preparing for signup for the 2010 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) and the Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program. The deadline to signup is 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% of the direct payment. Producers on a farm with a total of 10 base acres or less are not eligible to receive payments on that farm unless the farm is wholly owned by a minority or limited resource farmer or rancher.

The optional ACRE (Average Crop Revenue Election) 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 operator and all owners of 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.



**CRP Managed Haying and Grazing**

Don't like to wait in line? Like to have some of your summer's work done ahead of time? If you think you'd like to participate in CRP managed haying and/or grazing in 2010, you can check with the office this winter to find out what acres are available for haying or grazing, and get the paperwork completed. If you sign up this winter, and end up not haying or grazing some or all of the acres you sign up for, that's OK – we have you sign a form next summer for the acres actually hayed or grazed.

**SURE ELIGIBILITY**

If you want to be eligible for possible SURE (Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments) disaster program benefits in 2010, the following applies to you!! The insurance deadline for 2010 hay under PRF – Rainfall Index insurance is November 30, 2009 (the deadline for APH hay insurance already passed) and for spring-seeded crops is March 15, 2010. The deadline at the FSA Office for NAP coverage on 2010 non-insurable hay and spring seeded non-insurable crops is March 15, 2010. To be eligible for SURE, producers must have at least the catastrophic (CAT) level of insurance on all economically significant insurable crops and FSA NAP coverage on all economically significant non-insurable crops by the applicable sales closing date. Remember that a crop of economic significance is one which is expected to contribute at least 5% to the value of all crops grown on all acres you have an interest in nationwide (this is not on the crops you sell, it is on the crops you grow, including hay and other crops you utilize yourself).

There are a couple of exceptions to the “risk management purchase requirements” listed above. Crop insurance and NAP coverage are not required if the criteria are met for Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, or Beginning Farmer and Rancher producers. Also, there are two “De Minimis” exceptions that apply only to the SURE program that give producers the option to waive the insurance or NAP requirements for crops. De Minimis Exception 1) is crops that are not economically significant (less than 5% of the total production of a SURE farm nationwide), and exception 2) a crop for which the administrative fee for NAP coverage exceeds 10% of the value of that coverage. Note: crop insurance or NAP coverage on grazing land does not have to be purchased in order to be eligible for SURE or ELAP, but it is required for LFP eligibility.



**2009 Clip Wool Loan/LDP Deadline**

The deadline to request a loan or LDP (Loan Deficiency Payment) on your 2009-clip wool and mohair is January 31, 2010.

**Farm Loan Guaranteed Loan Amount Raised**

The loan limit for the 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% of the loan amount. Farmers interested in guaranteed loans should apply through a conventional lender.



**Equipment and Land Lease Payment Deadline**

The Sheridan County FSA Committee has set December 31, 2009 as the deadline to make equipment and land lease payments for the 2009 crop year. This applies to land and/or equipment lease payments for the 2009 crop year when they are needed as a “significant contribution” to the farming operation to make the producer eligible to receive farm program payments. Please contact this office for further information if you are unsure of your situation.



**Foreign land investors:** AFIDA was enacted to establish a nationwide system to monitor foreign ownership, purchases and sales of U.S. ag land. Foreign persons shall report any ownership, purchases, leases over 10 years long, and sales to FSA within 90 days of the date of transfer. A foreign person who either fails to file or knowingly submits a false report is subject to a penalty of up to 25% of the fair market value of the land.



Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to participate in FSA programs should contact Donna Hilyard, CED, at 119 N. Jackson, Plentywood, MT 59254; phone 406-765-1550 ext. 102; or email at donna.hilyard@mt.usda.gov.

**Timely report** any farm owner or operator changes, share changes, entity changes, owned and/or leased land changes, etc. Farm payments are dependent on correct farm records! Have you deeded any land to a trust for estate planning purposes? If so, you need to notify us, because we have to carry the trust as the landowner. It is also important that any change in the producer's bank account, such as type of account, bank mergers, routing number or account numbers, be provided to the county office promptly if you receive payments via direct deposit.

**Monday, March 15, 2010** is the sales closing date for all NAP (non-insurable) crops except value loss and honey (it is also the crop insurance sales closing date for 2010 spring-seeded crops). NAP provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields occur as a result of natural disaster.

Eligible crops in Sheridan County include, but are not limited to, rangeland (very important for livestock disaster program eligibility), barley hay, pea hay, oat hay, grass hay, camelina, corn, crambe, soybeans, sunflowers, potatoes, and pinto beans. To be eligible for new disaster programs, you must have NAP or insurance coverage on all crops of economic significance (including your grazing acres to be eligible for the livestock forage program).

**Program information** is available in the Sheridan County News every week, and daily on local radio KATQ at 8:20 a.m. Stay informed about programs that can benefit your farming and ranching operation!!

## **Important Information and Deadlines Inside!**

**U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Sheridan County FSA Office  
119 N. Jackson  
Plentywood, MT 59254**

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*Happy Holidays to  
you and yours, from  
the Sheridan  
County FSA staff!*