

Yellowstone County FSA
1629 Ave. D, Bldg. A
Billings, MT 59102



Yellowstone County FSA
October 2009

County Committee Members

Bart Erickson, Chairman
Ken Uffelman, Vice-Chairman
Forrest Ewen, Regular Member
Channis Whiteman, Minority Adv.
Juanita Stovall, Minority Adv.

FSA Office Personnel

Nina Gonzalez, PT
Jackie Gaglia, PT
Lisa Pederson, PT
Karen Sims, Farm Loan PT
Mike Turley, Farm Loan Mgr.
William Ballard, Farm Loan Mgr.
Kevin Johnson, CED

Dates to Remember:

November 6th – COC ballots mailed
November 26th – Thanksgiving Day - Office Closed
December 1st – NAP sales closing date for 2010 honey
December 10th – LFP/ELAP deadline
December 25th – Christmas – Office Closed
January 1st – New Years Day - Office Closed



Special accommodations will be made for the physically handicapped, vision or hearing impaired upon request. If accommodation is required, please contact Kevin Johnson, CED at (406) 657-6135.



Signup for LFP and ELAP

Two new programs: the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP), are now available as a result of 2008 Farm Bill.

LFP provides financial assistance to eligible livestock producers who have suffered grazing losses due to qualifying fire or drought. For fire, such as the Dunn Mountain fire in 2008, LFP provides payments to eligible livestock producers that have suffered grazing losses on rangeland managed by a federal agency if the eligible livestock producer is prohibited by the federal agency from grazing the normal permitted livestock on the managed rangeland due to a qualifying fire. (Producers in Yellowstone County are ineligible under drought as LFP guidelines in 2008 and 2009 were not met. A drought rating {determined by the U.S. Drought Monitor} of D2 for eight consecutive weeks in any area of the county during the normal grazing period, is the trigger for drought eligibility.)

ELAP provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees, and farm-raised fish that have losses due to disease, adverse weather or other conditions, including losses due to blizzards and wildfires (Dunn Mountain fire - private and/or State land qualifies). ELAP assistance is available for losses not covered under other Supplemental Agricultural Disaster Assistance programs established by the 2008 Farm Bill, specifically LFP (LFP is a grazing loss program), Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP is a death loss program), and the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE is a total farm revenue program that not only addresses production and quality losses but also market losses). 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 **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. Losses must occur in the calendar year the application is being filed.

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.

Farm Storage Facility Loan Program Undergoes Changes

The 2008 Farm Bill provided changes to the Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFL). FSFL provides low-interest financing for producers of eligible commodities to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities. The maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL is \$500,000. Participants are required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent drying and handling equipment.

Loan terms of seven, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan. Interest rates for each term may be different and are based on the rate which CCC borrows from the Treasury Department.

Partial funding can be made after a portion of the construction has been completed. The final fund disbursement will be made when all construction is completed.

The following commodities are eligible for farm storage facility loans:

- Corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, oats, wheat, barley or minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain
- Corn, grain sorghum, wheat, oats or barley harvested as other-than-whole grain
- Pulse crops – lentils, small chickpeas and dry peas
- Hay
- Renewable biomass
- Fruits (including nuts) and vegetables – cold storage facilities.

Contact the office if you are interested in receiving further information about the changes to FSFL.

2010 DIRECT & COUNTER CYCLICAL PROGRAM (DCP)

2010 DCP contracts will be mailed to operators by the near future. Please note: **SIGNED CONTRACTS MUST BE RETURNED TO THIS OFFICE BY CLOSE OF BUSINESS ON JUNE 1, 2010.**

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION

This year's election in Yellowstone County will be the area north of the Yellowstone River Valley. Vera Beth Johnson and Bart Erickson are the nominees for the area. Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning November 6, 2009. The final day for voters to submit their ballots is December 7, 2009.

Linkage Requirements for SURE

According to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act 2009 (stimulus package) any producers that did "buy-in 2" (February 17, 2009 – May 18, 2009), to become eligible for 2008 SURE, are required to meet linkage by purchasing coverage in the next available year at a level of coverage equal to 70% of the yield and 100% of the price for insurable crops or NAP coverage for NAP crops.

Farm Loans for Minority Groups

FSA can make direct and guarantee loans to those considered as minorities under USDA definition. These groups include women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, and Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Funds can be used to buy and operate family-sized farms and ranches.

Individuals and entities primarily and directly engaged in farming and ranching on family-sized operations may apply. A family-sized farm is considered to be one that a family can operate and manage itself. Applicants must meet all requirements for FSA's regular farm loan program assistance. Contact the FSA office for exact criteria.

Repayment terms for direct operating loans depend on the collateral securing the loan and usually run from 1 to 7 years. Interest rates for direct loans are set periodically according to the Government's cost of borrowing. Repayment terms for direct farm ownership loans are up to 40 years. Interest rates for guaranteed loans are established by the lender. Applications for direct loans are made through the local FSA office. Applications for guaranteed loans are made with the lender.

Agricultural Financial and Production Management Workshops to be Held

FSA, in conjunction with Montana State University (MSU) Extension Service will be conducting Financial and Production Management training beginning October 26th.

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
NTDA Office, Stone Child Campus	395-4095
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	653-3900
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
10/26	Goals & Assessments/Communicating Estate Planning	George Haynes/ Marhsa Goetting, MSU
11/02	Family Business Issues/Tools for Estate Planning	George Haynes/ Marhsa Goetting, MSU
11/09	Production Records/Financial Analysis I (Production Records Session will discuss mandatory and adequate recordkeeping for FSA and other government livestock and crop programs)	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



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Yellowstone County FSA Office
1629 Ave. D, Bldg. A
Billings, MT 59102

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FSA Implements New Payment Process for CRP and DCP Payments

In October, FSA is implementing a new payment processing system beginning with the annual Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) payments and final direct payments under the Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP). Providing all contracts, crop reports, and eligibility forms have been properly filed, FSA will be doing their best to ensure delays are minimized with the new system. However, some of the payment processing that used to occur behind the scenes within the software will now be more evident and may be confusing. In addition, all payments issued by FSA will be routed to the Department of Treasury to comply with the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996. What this means is that any delinquent Federal debt may also be offset from payments due you from FSA/CCC.

Annual CRP payments and final direct DCP payments may be reduced for:

- payment reductions for haying and grazing
- existing FSA/CCC debt
- advance direct payments
- eligibility determinations implemented with the 2008 Farm Bill (direct attribution, member contribution of labor and management, etc.)
- delinquent Federal debt

Payments will be processed automatically with reduced local FSA intervention and deposited directly into accounts signed up for direct deposit. Paper payment checks will still be mailed by Kansas City. A transaction statement will be mailed to payment recipients explaining the payment issued and any offsets applied. **PLEASE RETAIN THE TRANSACTION STATEMENTS IN ORDER TO RECONCILE THE FSA-1099'S THAT ARE ISSUED TO YOU IN JANUARY.** The Department of Treasury will notify the payment recipient of any offset taken. (Local FSA offices will not receive a copy of the transaction statement or notification of the Treasury offset.) Questions regarding Treasury offsets may be directed to the Treasury Offset Program (TOP) Call Center at 1-800-304-3107.

