July 2010

Bannock FSA News

USDA
Bannock County FSA
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Hours
Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

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COC Nominations Open

The County Office Committee (COC) plays a crucial role in helping the county office staff implement Farm Bill programs. Producers are encouraged to participate in the FSA COC election process by nominating an eligible candidate by Aug. 2.

To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign form FSA-669A. The form and further information about FSA COC elections are available online at: www.fsa.usda.gov ; select *News & Events* then *County Committee Elections*. Nomination forms for the 2010 COC elections must be postmarked or received in the county office by close of business on August 2, 2010.

FSA county committee members serve three-year terms and make decisions on disaster and conservation programs, emergency programs, commodity price support loan programs and other important agricultural issues. Committees consist of three to five members elected by eligible local producers.

Ballots will be mailed to producers beginning November 5, 2010. Completed ballots must be dropped off or received via mail at the county office by December 6, 2010.

FSA Farm Loans

FSA is committed to providing family farmers with loans to meet their farm credit needs. If you are having trouble getting the credit you need for your farm, FSA direct and guaranteed loans are currently available.

Ask your lender about an FSA loan guarantee if you've had a setback and your lender is reluctant to extend or renew your loan.

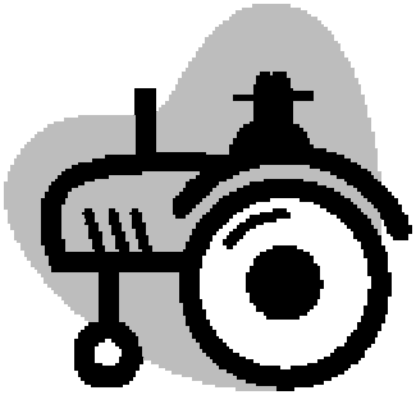
Farm ownership loans or farm operating loans may be obtained as direct loans for a maximum of up to $300,000. Guaranteed loans can reach a maximum indebtedness of $1,112,000. Producers are encouraged not to wait until the last minute to apply.

FSA staff will help you complete the application forms and help you understand what information is required and where to find it. Call your county office staff today.

Thank You

As we move into July we would like to thank all those who were able to file crop reports by the June 30 deadline. We realize the late Spring made crop reporting a little uncertain this year and your willingness to make those decisions with our FSA staff has been exemplary. The Bannock County staff would like to say thanks for the prompt, patient acreage reporting and crop certification. Filing an accurate and timely report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of benefits for a variety of FSA programs. All cropland on the farm must be reported to receive benefits from the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program, Marketing Assistance Loans and Loan Deficiency Payments and CRP.

Anytime we can assist Idaho producers to be effective in their business practices we are ready and willing to help. Feel free to call the office or drop by with any questions.



Transition Incentives

The Transition Incentives Program (TIP) encourages retired or retiring owners or operators to transition their Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres to beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers.

TIP sign-up opened May 17, 2010. If all program requirements are met, TIP provides annual rental payments to the retiring farmer for up to two additional years after the expiration of the CRP contract, provided the transition is not to a family member.

Farm Safety

Summer can be a busy and fast-moving time on Bannock County farms and ranches. **Be careful**. FSA wants to be sure our customers are **SAFETY CONSCIOUS** this summer.

Remember: Walk around machinery and check shields and guards; make sure the PTO's master shield is in place; make sure you have Slow Moving Vehicle signs.

When taking medicine, take it at the appropriate time and eat on schedule.

When working in grain bins, know that flowing grain can kill, quickly. A person caught in flowing grain is trapped in five seconds. Don't work alone in bins or confined spaces, and if that's not possible let someone know where you are by checking in regularly by cell phone.

The American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) offers these tips for farmers:

1. Educate yourself on farm equipment. Follow instructions according to the equipment's manuals about safety.
2. Conduct regular equipment inspections.
3. Don't wear loose clothing while entering confined spaces such as grain bins, silos and hoppers as this can prevent entanglements.
4. Install Rollover Protective Structures (ROPS) on tractors.
5. Use seat belts while operating tractors with a ROPS. Do not allow additional passengers on the tractor with you.
6. While operating tractors and other farm equipment, be very cautious on rural roadways.
7. Use protective gear when operating machinery: Be familiar with hazardous chemicals. Take extra precaution when handling chemicals such as anhydrous ammonia, carbon dioxide, methane gas and hydrogen sulfide.
8. Consistently educate your family and co-workers about safety practices, especially children.

Compliance Spot Checks

Compliance spot checks will be conducted on 2010 crops. Instead of locally selecting farms, contracts, deficiency loans and so on for review, a nationwide selection of producers is employed. Spot check selections are to be conducted based on a producer's participation in Conservation Reserve Program, Direct and Countercyclical Program, Loan Deficiency Program and others.

For more information about the spot check selection procedure, contact your local Farm Service Agency office.

Farm Reconstitutions

For FSA program purposes, tracts having the same owner and the same operator are grouped under one farm serial number. When changes in ownership or operation take place, a farm reconstitution is necessary.

The reconstitution—or recon—is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. Remember, to be effective for the current year, recons must be requested by **August 2** for farms enrolled in specific programs.

The following are the different methods used when doing a farm recon:

Estate Method — the division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate;

Designation of Landowner Method — may be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons. In order to use this method the land sold must have been owned for at least three years, or a waiver granted, and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding;

DCP Cropland Method — the division of bases in the same proportion that the DCP cropland for each resulting tract relates to the DCP cropland on the parent tract;

Default Method — the division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system.

Successor-In-Interest

Many FSA programs will allow payments to be made to heirs or successors when a program participant passes away. Additionally, contracts in programs such as CRP must be revised to reflect the successor(s) to a deceased participant's interest.

In the event of an FSA program participant's death, it is important that FSA be notified. Entities and joint operations that participate in FSA programs also need to notify FSA if a shareholder or member passes away. FSA benefits are reported to IRS and maintaining current, accurate records about participants is vital to ensuring that those payments are reported correctly.

Foreign Landowner Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA.

Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA with 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property.

County government offices, real estate agents, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

Rural Youth Loans

FSA makes loans to rural youths to establish and operate income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is $5,000.

Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

- United States citizenship (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien
- 10 years to 20 years of age
- Compliance with FSA's general eligibility requirements
- Reside in a rural area, city or town with a population of 50,000 or fewer people
- Inability to get a loan from other sources
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the project and the loan, along with providing adequate supervision.

Stop by the county office for help preparing and processing the application forms. The FSA Farm Loan staff can help you with questions you may have about a particular program.

Loans for the Socially Disadvantaged

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. Loans are available for operating type loans and/or purchase or improve farms or ranches.

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, the FSA has provided priority funding for members of Socially Disadvantaged Applicants.

A socially disadvantaged applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities.

For purposes of this program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders.

If producers or their spouses believe they would qualify as socially disadvantaged, they should contact their local FSA office for details. FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

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United States Department of Agriculture
Farm Service Agency

Help Available to Stressed Farmers

Recently, the economy, inclement weather, and other factors have hurt some farming operations around the country. These events can push a producer to the emotional breaking point. Watching your livelihood being threatened is difficult for farmers and ranchers, especially for those whose income is solely dependent on agriculture.

The National Suicide Prevention Hotline is available to help. If you know a farmer or rancher who is under stress and is reluctant to ask for help, or if you just need to talk to someone, call 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Your call will be routed to the crisis center nearest you, where trained staffers are available 24/7. This nationwide service is free and confidential. Help is just a phone call away.

For more information, go to http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/. This service is not affiliated with the US Department of Agriculture.

Selected Interest Rates for July 2010	
Farm Operating - Direct	**2.875%**
Farm Ownership - Direct	**4.875%**
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	**1.500%**
Emergency	**3.750%**

Dates to Remember	
May 17	Transition Incentive Program Signup Opened
July 15	Deadline for reporting Production for the ACRE program
August 1	Recons must be requested
August 2	Deadline to submit COC election nominations
Sept 30	NAP sign-up deadline for fall seeded and perennial grass seed for the Northern District.

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To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202)-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."