



February 2011

**Bingham
County
FSA Office**

**County Office
Staff**

Steve Fullmer, CED
Elise Cumpston, PT
Sheila Rigby, PT

Farm Loan Staff

Dustin Carter, FLM
Ben Young, FLO
Matt Macedo, FLO
Nikki Roberts, FLPT

www.fsa.usda.gov/

Hours

Monday - Friday
8:00 am - 4:30 pm

Meet the New Farm Loan Program Staff

Bingham County FSA would like to announce the following changes to the Farm Loan Program staff:

- Dustin Carter has been selected as the new Farm Loan Manager for Bingham County. He has worked as a Farm Loan Officer for FSA for a total of 4 years.
- Benjamin Young is a newly appointed Farm Loan Officer. He has been working at the Bingham County office for the past year.
- Matt Macedo is also a newly appointed Farm Loan Officer. He has been working at FSA for the past year in the Madison County FSA office, and will now be stationed in Bingham County.

Please join us in welcoming this new change in staff!

New CRP General Sign-up

New sign-ups for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) will begin on March 14, 2011, and continue through April 15, 2011. During the signup period, producers may offer eligible land for CRP's competitive general signup.

There are many types of CRP practices. Some include efforts to improve the level of water in the Snake River Aquifer and increased coverage for the Columbian Sharp Tailed Grouse. Producers will need to determine if they have land eligible, figure out the best practice for the land and make certain they have all the proper elements so they can obtain a high EBI ranking.

Land currently not enrolled in CRP may be offered in this signup provided all eligibility requirements are met. Additionally, current CRP participants with contracts expiring this fall may make new contract offers. Contracts awarded under this signup become effective Oct. 1, 2011.

To help ensure that interested farmers and ranchers are aware of the signup period, USDA has signed partnership agreements with several conservation and wildlife organizations that will all play an active role in USDA's 2011 CRP outreach efforts. Among others, Idaho FSA collaborates with NRCS and the Idaho Fish and Game Dept. who also partners with Pheasants Forever.

As administrator of the Conservation Reserve Program, FSA will evaluate and rank eligible CRP offers using an Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) that assists in calculating the environmental benefits to be gained from the contract. The EBI consists of five environmental factors (wildlife, water, soil, air and enduring benefits). Cost factors are also entered into the equation.

For more information call or stop by your local FSA office.

CRP Expiring?

There are over 117,000 acres of CRP expiring in 2011 around Idaho. You may be wondering how you as a landowner can maintain the conservation benefits that CRP is providing, while at the same time providing income generation to your agricultural operation. CRP can be an important "working lands" tool for Idaho landowners, by providing an annual rental payment while addressing important resource needs by planting perennial vegetation.

The first and easiest option is to try to reenroll the land in the next general CRP sign-up. As you know with CRP, the higher the landowner's Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) the more likely the offer is to be accepted. The easiest way to increase your EBI score is to improve your grass/forb planting to a more wildlife friendly mix or maybe install pollinator habitat.

A second option, if you have land in the eastern and southern part of the state, is to see if you qualify for Idaho's State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE). This program is a practice within CRP that is targeted at lands within Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse range. SAFE is nearly the same as CRP in providing an annual rental payment, while having the landowner improve their parcel to provide important habitat for sharp-tailed grouse. SAFE is a continuous sign-up so there is no need to wait for the announcement of a general sign-up.

A third option is to convert your CRP into a grass-based agricultural operation. This means instead of breaking up that important sod and putting the land back into row crop production, you keep it in grass and instead turn to haying or grazing for income.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has several programs that are designed to assist a landowner in making this transition; the most notable is the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). Your best bet is making an appointment with a NRCS representative to discuss options for technical and financial assistance in installing fencing, watering facilities, and improving range seeding as well as assistance in designing a prescribed grazing system on your property.

These options will help a landowner to both retain the resource benefits provided by the original enrollment in CRP as well as reward them for this benefit with a continued revenue stream. Interested landowners should contact their local USDA Service Center for more information.

Sorghum Check-off Referendum Scheduled

USDA will conduct a referendum on the Sorghum Check-off Program Feb. 1-28, 2011, at local Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices. Ballots may be obtained in person, by mail or facsimile at county FSA offices, or via the Internet at www.ams.usda.gov/sorghumpage.

Any eligible person engaged in the production of importation of sorghum from July 1, 2008, to December 31, 2010, is eligible to participate. Individuals are required to provide

documentation such as a sales receipt or remittance form that shows they engaged in the production or importation of sorghum.

Sorghum Checkoff is a national, coordinated, self-help marketing program designed to strengthen the position of sorghum in the market place, maintain and expand existing domestic and foreign markets and uses for sorghum, and develop new markets and uses for sorghum.

1099-G is in the Mail

Producers who have received payments from FSA are also receiving a CCC-1099-G in the mail. A CCC-1099-G is a report to the Internal Revenue Service regarding FSA payments made to producers during the previous calendar year. The CCC-1099-G is a service to help participating producers report taxable income.

When the CCC-1099-G is received, it should be checked with your records to see that the amounts are correct. It is not intended to replace the program participant's responsibility to report income to the IRS.

ATTENTION: Refunds are no longer reported on the 1099-G, but will be available online from the FSA Financial Inquiries (FSA-FI) web-based database.

Program participants with an eAuthentication user ID and password may access their refund information at FSA-FI and select "Inquiry Type 1099/Refund Reports". Refund amounts are displayed on the Producer's Year-to-Date Activity web page.

If you have a question concerning the 1099-G refund information, you may contact your local FSA office for assistance locating the correct payment data.

Farm Loan Programs

FSA provides both annual and term operating loans, along with long-term financing, to eligible producers who are unable to obtain credit from other sources.

In the last several years, our policy and procedure has been streamlined and our credit

limits have increased to improve the service that we provide. We have a great down payment loan program to help beginning farmers, minorities and women purchase farms. This program presents a great opportunity for bringing the next generation of farmers into the business.

We now have a conservation loan program as well to help implement improvements approved in NRCS conservation plans. The conservation loan program does not require the test for commercial credit, making it available to a much greater number of producers.

For more information on loan program eligibility and current interest rates, please contact one of our loan officers who look forward to serving you.

Actively Engaged

USDA has amended the rules that govern the requirements to be 'actively engaged' in farming. These rules apply to eligibility for payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) or Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program administered by FSA.

Normally the stockholder or a member of a legal entity **must** make contributions of active personal labor and/or active personal management for the farming operation. The contributions are to be performed on regular basis, must be identifiable, and separate from the contributions of others.

The exception to this rule for a stockholder or member of a legal entity only occurs when both of the following apply: At least half of the interest in the legal entity is held by stockholders or members who are providing active personal labor or active personal management; and the total direct payments received by the legal entity and each of the members does not exceed \$40,000.

Adjusted Gross Income

USDA has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Internal Revenue Service to establish an electronic information exchange process for verifying compliance with the adjusted gross income (AGI) provisions for farm programs. Written consent from the IRS to verify AGI compliance will be required from each producer

or payment recipient. No actual tax data will be included in the report that IRS sends to USDA.

The agreement ensures that payments are not issued to producers whose AGI exceeds certain limits. The limits set in the 2008 Farm Bill are \$500,000 nonfarm average AGI for commodity and disaster programs; \$750,000 farm average AGI for direct payments; and \$1 million nonfarm average AGI for conservation programs.

Participants in CCC programs subject to average AGI rules must submit form CCC-927 (Individual) and/or CCC-928 (Legal Entity) to the Internal Revenue Service by June 15. These forms may be obtained from local FSA and NRCS offices or online at: <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov>

DCP/ACRE Programs

June 1st is the deadline to sign the DCP/ACRE contracts. Advance payments are available upon request. Payment eligibility, adjusted gross income (AGI), and reporting AGI to the IRS must be completed at the time the DCP/ACRE contract is signed. Appointments will not be scheduled, come when you can.

Crop Reporting

June 30th is the deadline for reporting all planted acreage for 2011. Appointments will be made.

2010 Crop Production

June 30th is the deadline to submit the crop production records for 2010. If you miss this deadline, all 2010 payments will be required to be paid back.



Bingham County FSA Office
725 Jensen Grove Dr. Ste. #2
Blackfoot, ID 83221

Dates to Remember	
Feb. 21	Presidents' Day – office closed
Mar 14	CRP Sign-up Begins

Selected Interest Rates for February 2011	
Farm Operating - Direct	2.250%
Farm Ownership – Direct and Conservation Loan	4.750%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.500%
Emergency	3.750%

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