



NEWSLETTER



October 2012

**Canyon/Ada/
Owyhee County
FSA Office**
2208 E Chicago St
Ste B
Caldwell, ID
Phone
208-454-8695
Fax 208-454-1037
www.fsa.usda.gov/id

County Committee
Michael Goodson, Chairperson
Robin Wylie Lindquist, Vice-
Chairman
Helen Lammey, Member
Marcella Stewart, Member
Ted Wheeler, Member
Martin Jaca, Member
Dan Mori, Chairperson
Kathy Smith, Member

County Committee meets
Quarterly
Staff
Farm Programs
Kyla Pearson, CED
X107
Farleigh Byers, PT
X100
Nick Molenaar, PT
X111
Mark Havlicak, PT
X104
Debra Ragsdale, PT
x109
Gwen Miller, PT
X105

Farm Loan Programs
Lora Ulrich, FLM
X102
Mike Anderson, FLO
X103
Susan Smith, FLO
X110
Shawna Anderson, FLO
x108
Vicki Keen, PT
X101

Increased Guaranteed Loan Limit

The Farm Service Agency has announced that the loan limit for the Guaranteed Loan Program will increase to \$1,302,000 on Oct. 1, 2012. The limit is adjusted annually based on data compiled by the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

The lending limit increases every year according to an inflation index. The maximum combined guaranteed and direct farm loan indebtedness will also increase to \$1,602,000.

As a reminder, the one-time loan origination fee charged on FSA guaranteed Farm Ownership and Operating loans is 1.5 percent of the guaranteed portion of the loan.

Producers should contact their local FSA County Offices with questions about farm loans.

County Committee Elections Canyon/Ada LAA 4, LAA 5 Owyhee LAA2

Eligible voters in the above communities will be receiving a ballot to vote for a representative in their area. The LAA4 nominee is Dave Reynolds, LAA 5 Ted Wheeler and Owyhee LAA 2 is Martin Jaca. You can still write in a candidate on the ballot you receive if you choose. Watch your mailbox for your official county office committee election ballot starting early next month. Ballots will be mailed to all eligible voters on Nov. 5, 2012. If for some reason you don't receive a ballot, feel free to notify the Canyon/Ada/Owyhee FSA office.

Completed and signed ballots must be returned to the county office by close of business on Dec.3, 2012.

2012 DCP Final Payments

DCP payments for 2012 will be issued after Oct. 1, 2012. These payments will be deposited directly into participating producers' bank accounts.

If there are any unearned payments, Commodity Credit Corporation will automatically subtract those amounts from the October Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program payments.

USDA Announces Hispanic and Women Farmer and Rancher Claims Period

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has announced that Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA in past decades can file claims between September 24, 2012 and March 25, 2013.

The process offers a voluntary alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or female farmer and rancher who can prove that USDA denied their applications for loan or loan servicing assistance for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000.

The voluntary claims process will make available at least \$1.33 billion for cash awards and tax relief payments, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief, to eligible Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers. There are no filing fees to participate in the program.

The Department will continue reaching out to potential Hispanic and female claimants, around the country who may be eligible for this program.

Call center representatives can be reached at 1-888-508-4429. Potential claimants who registered earlier this year should have received a claims package. All those interested in learning more or receiving additional information about the claims process should visit the website or contact the claims telephone number.

Website: www.farmerclaims.gov

Phone: **1-888-508-4429**

Claims Period: Sept. 24, 2012 - Mar 25, 2013.

Independent legal services companies will administer the claims process and adjudicate the claims. Although there are no filing fees to participate and a lawyer is not required to participate in the claims process, persons seeking legal advice may contact a lawyer or other legal services provider.

2013 Reporting of Pasture, Rangeland, Forage and Fall Seeded Crops

All producers are reminded that the acreage reporting date for pasture, rangeland, forage and Fall seeded crops has changed. **Nov. 15, 2012** is the new acreage reporting date for these agricultural practices. All fall seeded crops including winter wheat now have a reporting date of **Dec.15, 2012**. Please call for an appointment to certify your wheat crop.

Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

The Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program allows producers of eligible commodities to obtain low-interest financing 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 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 7, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan. Interest rates for each term rate may be different and are based on the rate which CCC borrows from the U.S. Treasury Department.

Loans will not be disbursed until the facility has been erected and inspected with the exception of one (1) qualifying partial disbursement.

Applications for FSFL must be submitted to the FSA county office that maintains the farm's records. An FSFL must be approved before any site preparation or construction can begin.

The following commodities are eligible for farm storage facility loans:

- Corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, 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.

For more information about FSFL visit the FSA county office or www.fsa.usda.gov.

Marketing Assistance Loans

A Marketing Assistance Loan (MAL) is available for producers who share in the risk of producing the crop. To be eligible, a producer must maintain continual beneficial interest in the crop from harvest through the earlier of the date the loan is repaid or CCC takes title to the commodity. Once beneficial interest in a commodity is lost, the commodity is ineligible for loan — even if the producer regains beneficial interest.

Commodity loan eligibility also requires compliance with conservation and wetland protection requirements; beneficial interest requirements, acreage reporting and ensuring that the commodity meets Commodity Credit Corporation minimum grade and quality standards. The quality of the commodity in farm storage must be maintained throughout the term of the loan.

Producers do not have to participate in the Direct and Counter-Cyclical and/or ACRE Programs to be eligible for commodity loans.

Violating provisions of a marketing assistance loan may result in liquidated damages, calling the loan and denial of future farm-stored loans.

Rural Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency 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:

- Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien
- Be 10 years to 20 years of age
- Comply with FSA's general eligibility requirements
- Reside in a rural area, city or town with a population of 50,000 or fewer people
- Be unable 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.

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 groups.

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

IRS 1099 Changes

Calendar year 2012 has brought changes to the way FSA reports farm program payments to the producer and to the IRS.

In past years, IRS Forms 1099-G would be issued to show all program payments received from the Farm Service Agency, regardless of the amount.

Starting with calendar year 2012, producers whose total reportable payments from FSA are less than \$600 will not receive IRS Form 1099-G. Also, producers who receive payments from more than one county will only receive one Form 1099-G if the total of all payments from all counties is \$600 or more.

The same changes will apply to producers and vendors who normally receive IRS Form 1099-MISC from FSA.

Selected Interest Rates for October 2012

Farm Operating - Direct	1.125%
Farm Ownership - Direct	3.00%
Limited Resource	5.00%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50%
Emergency	2.125%
Farm Storage Facility – 7 year	1.125%
Farm Storage Facility – 10 year	1.750%
Farm Storage Facility – 12 year	2.00%
Sugar Storage Facility	2.125%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.125%

Dates to Remember

- Nov. 5 County Committee election ballots in mail
- Nov. 12 Veterans Day Federal Holiday
- Nov. 15 Crop reporting deadline for pasture, rangeland and all other forage crops
- Nov. 22 Thanksgiving Day Federal Holiday
- Dec. 1 NAP deadline for perennial grass seed crops in East, South & West Districts and all other perennials and honey.
- Dec. 15 Crop reporting deadline for Fall alfalfa seed, Fall barley, Fall canola, dry peas, Fall Mint, Fall wheat and all other Fall seeded small grains.

NRCS CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program)

In case you have not heard about the NRCS CSP program, or would like more information about it, you may find information and review a Conservation Stewardship Self-screening Checklist at the following link: http://www.id.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/new_csp/index.html. You may also call or stop by your local NRCS office for more information.

The Conservation Stewardship Program pays participants for conservation performance. The program encourages agricultural and forestry producers to address resource concerns by improving and maintaining existing conservation activities and undertaking additional conservation activities. CSP is available to all producers regardless of operation size or crop produced. Eligible lands include rangeland, cropland, hayland, pastureland, nonindustrial private forest lands, and agricultural land under the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe. Participation in the program is voluntary. CSP applications are accepted on a continuous basis with announced cut-off dates for ranking and funding. Find out if this program is right for your operation by visiting the NRCS website or a local office near you.

Taking Cover

Unless you farm the land, you may not think of soil as being alive, but in fact there are more living organisms in a tablespoon of soil than there are people on earth. Millions of beneficial soil organisms go about their daily lives eating, growing, breathing, and dying beneath our feet. This active and complex habitat provides all plants with the nutrition needed to survive and grow. Why should we care about soil health? In essence, poor soils mean depressed plant life and healthy soils means productive plant life, which translates to improved yields and an economic boost to your bottom line. Did you know there have been plant roots that have measured 387 miles in total length and some plants can have an average root growth rate of 3 miles per day? Plant roots play a pivotal role in soil health by providing habitat for fungi, bacteria, and tiny soil animals; however, agriculture tillage operations kill these root systems and the habitat that soil organisms need to survive. On the other hand, no tillage systems help foster soil health by keeping major root systems intact. Many producers in the area are seeing a benefit from using no-till systems.

Another method to advance soil health is the cover crop. Cover crops are an additional benefit that provides habitat and a food source for essential soil organisms. Cover crops also facilitate increased organic matter, soil water conservation, prevent erosion, improve biological and physical properties, suppress weeds, improve crop yields, break up compaction, reduce the use of fertilizer and pesticides, and increase nutrient cycling. By feeding the soil, you are feeding future crops; however, not all plants are created equal.

Some, plants are great for erosion control, others may be good for increasing soil organic matter, weed suppression, attracting beneficial insects, association with mycorrhizal fungireducing soil compaction, and so on. Experiments with cover crop mixes have shown that a minimum of seven species is best. Typical mixes include varieties of grasses, brassicas, and legumes for plant and root diversity so as to enhance soil building efforts. A multispecies mix creates an explosion of biodiversity. Determining your resource concerns and what you want to accomplish with a cover crop will influence what you include in the mix. Greater diversity means enhanced food web complexity and the greater the complexity the higher the number of functional organisms in your soil.

Got worms? Earthworms are an important part of the soil food web and a sign of healthy soils when they are in abundance. How many times do you take a shovel with you to the field and dig a hole to see what is going on beneath the surface? Ten earthworms per square foot is an indication of a good soil; however, twenty-five worms per square foot is a sign of a very healthy and productive soil. Twenty-five earthworms per sq ft equals 1 million per acre. If you build it they will come; living root systems attract and produce more earthworms. My grandfather told me once “you have to think like a fish to catch a fish”, so think like a root if you want healthy soils. If you were a root, what would you want and need from the soil around you? The answer is biologically active soil with enough beneficial organisms to provide you with all of the nutrients you need and to keep disease away, as well as high organic matter, porous soils with good tilth, adequate water, and balanced pH, to name a few.

In addition to building better soils with cover crops, some farmers have incorporated cover crop grazing into their overall maintenance, and with good success. Many of these farmers don't own cattle or sheep, but allow those who do to reap the benefits of forage for a fee. In exchange, they gain additional inputs of manure and urine as well as not having to mechanically harvest the cover crop. The remaining cover crop residue continues to benefit the soil organism community below. Cover crops along with managed grazing multiply the soil health benefits that can be achieved. Remember, the soil is alive with millions of organisms that are fed by crops and organic materials creating a complex food web. No-till, cover crops, and cover crop grazing facilitate growth and self regulation of healthy soils. The healthiest and most productive soils have vegetation growing on them all of the time, such as forests and rangeland. Using cover crops instead of fallow periods mimics mother nature, and mother nature always knows best.

As agriculture producers progress and successfully address soil erosion, the next step for improvement is soil condition. Incorporating cover crops and grazing into your operation will put you on that path. For more information about cover crops, contact your local NRCS office. Below is a list of some great sites on the web where you can get more information on soil health, cover crops, and read about producers that are already using these methods in their operation:

<http://vimeo.com/channels/raythesoilguy>

<http://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/Books/Building-Soils-for-Better-Crops-3rd-Edition>

<http://www.bcsd.com/?id=23>

<http://magissues.farmprogress.com/DFM/DK07Jul07/dfm006.pdf>

<http://magissues.farmprogress.com/ksf/KS07Jul08/ksf004.pdf>

http://hayandforage.com/hay/firstclass_cover_soil_0808