September 2010

Caribou County FSA News

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

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September 30 Deadline for SURE Applications and Federal Crop Insurance

The deadline to submit USDA Farm Service Agency 2008 Supplemental Revenue Assistance (SURE) program payment applications is close of business on September 30, 2010. Applications not filed by September 30, 2010, will not receive a payment.

To maintain eligibility for SURE, producers must obtain a policy or plan of insurance of at least the catastrophic level (CAT) for the crop year 2011. Producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office and visit with a crop insurance agent (a list is available at your county office) to fully understand what crop insurance programs are available in the county and to ensure they are obtaining adequate coverage for eligibility.

SURE provides crop disaster assistance payments to eligible producers on farms that have incurred crop production or crop quality losses. The program takes into consideration crop losses on all crops grown by a producer nationwide. SURE provides assistance in an amount equal to 60 percent of the difference between the SURE farm guarantee and total farm revenue. The farm guarantee is based on the amount of crop insurance and Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage on the farm. Total farm revenue takes into account the actual value of production on the farm as well as insurance indemnities and certain farm program payments.

To be eligible for SURE, producers must have suffered at least a 10 percent production loss on a crop of economic significance. In addition, producers must meet the risk management purchase requirement by either obtaining a policy or plan of insurance, under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or NAP coverage, for all economically significant crops. For 2008 crops, producers had the opportunity to obtain a waiver of the risk management purchase requirement through a buy-in provision. Producers considered socially disadvantaged, a beginning farmer or rancher, or a limited resource farmer may be eligible for SURE without a policy or plan of insurance or NAP coverage.

NAP Coverage

The Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) was designed to reduce financial losses that occur when natural disasters cause a catastrophic loss of production or prevented planting of an eligible crop. NAP provides coverage equivalent to catastrophic (CAT) insurance. Statutes limit NAP coverage to each commercial crop or agricultural commodity, except livestock, for which CAT is not available.

Application deadlines for 2011 NAP coverage for a variety of crops are coming up in the next few months. Contact your nearest FSA office for specific deadlines.

Producers who already have coverage on 2010 NAP crops may choose to continue coverage on the same crop or crops for 2011, if the applicable service fee is submitted by the application closing date. A new CCC-471, application for coverage is not required to be signed when applying for continuous coverage of the same crop or crops.

Producers who choose to add a new crop(s) or delete a crop(s) from previous year's coverage or changing crop shares must file a new CCC-471 with signatures and pay the applicable service fee.

Producers with NAP coverage must remember to complete the following to qualify for benefits:

- Timely file acreage reports and keep track of harvested production using acceptable methods. For example, bale weights or other means of determining quantities of hay are required.
- File a "Notice of Loss" within 15 days of when a loss is apparent, due to drought, hail and other natural causes.

For more information and specific NAP crop deadlines, contact your nearest Farm Service Agency office.

CRP General Sign-Up 39 started Aug. 2 and ended on Aug. 27, 2010

USDA Farm Service Agency recently completed the Conservation Reserve Program General Sign-up 39 (SU 39) - the first general signup since 2006. SU 39 was developed to continue acceptance of environmentally-sensitive land by entering into new 10-to15-year contracts. All SU 39 offers will be ranked nationally based on an Environmental Benefits Index to determine which offers qualify to be enrolled into CRP.

Idaho county offices sent 792 offers of land for a total of 112,742 acres into CRP for consideration. An additional register containing over 50 offers await further processing.

Persons with accepted offers must sign the required paperwork by Sept. 17, 2010 so that all SU 39 contracts can be approved by Sept. 30, 2010. The effective date of SU 39 contracts will be Oct. 1, 2010.

Idaho offered eight different conservation practices that preserve the soil, clean water, and restore wildlife habitat.

FSA Loan Program for Conservation

FSA is launching a new Conservation Loan (CL) program that provides farm owners and farm-related business operators, access to credit for certain conservation practices to reduce soil erosion, improve water quality and promote sustainable and organic agricultural practices. Conservation practices must be approved by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS.) Examples of eligible practices are installation of conservation structures; establishment of forest cover; installation of water conservation measures; establishment or improvement of permanent pastures; implementation of manure management; and the adaptation of other emerging or existing conservation practices, techniques or technologies. Direct CL loans can be up to $300,000 and Guaranteed CLs from lenders working with FSA can go up to $1,112,000. For more information on the Conservation Loan program, contact a local FSA office or visit the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov.

CRP Participants – Think Twice before Mowing

A few years ago, mowing of CRP grass cover was a widely accepted practice by many participants, if for no other purpose than aesthetics. Today with more research and understanding, it has been shown that undisturbed grass cover will reduce soil erosion, improve water quality, and is more beneficial to wildlife than annually mowed grass covers.

Undisturbed CRP covers could appear unattractive to those that do not understand its value. Wildlife, especially grassland birds including pheasants and quail, and pollinators, such as bees and butterflies, view undisturbed CRP cover as a source of food and habitat suitable to raise their young. Wildlife will not utilize CRP cover if plants are not allowed to mature. Game birds and bees are disappearing because of habitat loss.

Undisturbed grass cover does not include noxious weeds such as thistle and teasel or woody species like trees and multiflora rose. These noxious weeds must be controlled by spot mowing affected areas or spot spraying of an approved herbicide. These treatments will have a minimal effect on the CRP practice cover's ability to meet the purposes of erosion control, water quality, and wildlife habitat. Spot mowing is less expensive than mowing the whole field. Aesthetic beauty should not replace good land steward-ship and economics.

Unnecessary disturbance of CRP cover is considered a violation of the terms and conditions of the CRP contract and conservation plan. Violations could potentially result in hefty penalties including contract termination and refund of all contract related payments.

Properly maintained CRP cover can be very attractive if noxious weeds and invasive species are controlled and grasses and wildflowers are allowed to mature.

Please scout your CRP fields before weeds go to seed. Contact your local FSA office for permission to spot treat your CRP grass cover during Idaho's primary nesting season (April 1st – Aug. 1st). Plan to have your CRP cover assessed for the need of mid-contract management activities that are designed to enhance your CRP cover for wildlife. Mid-contract management is a contractual obligation that is outlined your CRP-1 Appendix and conservation plan. Contact your local FSA office for more information on proper maintenance and management of CRP practice cover. Remember, beauty is in the eye of the conservationist.

Kids & Farm Safety

The need for farm safety awareness for children does not diminish after they return to school. Fall harvest and work with livestock still exposes kids to risks on evenings and weekends. Farm Safety 4 Just Kids recommends the following protection when dealing with grain, ATVs and livestock:

- Always lock access doors to grain storage structures.
- Lock out power to all types of grain-handling equipment.
- Always use the buddy system when you are unloading or loading grain, notifying a second person where you are.
- Never permit children to ride in grain wagons or enter grain storage areas.
- Always know where ALL family members are (especially children) at all times when grain is being loaded, unloaded, moved or otherwise handled.

ATV drivers: No matter what function the ATV performs, remember that it is only as capable as the operator.

Chores involving livestock care and handling are often one of the first responsibilities given to children, increasing their exposure to the dangers at an early age.

When working around animals encourage your children to:

- Be calm, move slowly, and avoid loud noises
- Wear steel toed shoes
- Avoid the hind legs of the animal
- Approach large animals at the shoulder
- Children should avoid animals with newborns
- Children should avoid stallions, bulls, rams, and boars
- Always have an escape route when working with animals in close quarters
- Wear helmets when riding horses.

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 new maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL is $500,000. Participants are now 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. New loan terms of 7, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan.

Payments are available in the form of a partial disbursement and the remaining final disbursement. The partial disbursement will be available after a portion of the construction has been completed. The final fund disbursement will be made when all construction is completed. The maximum amount of the partial disbursement will be 50 percent of the projected and approved total loan amount.

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 please visit your FSA county office or www.fsa.usda.gov.

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United States Department of Agriculture
Farm Service Agency

Succession in Interest

If you have made any changes that affect your interest in base acres since you signed your last Direct and Counter-cyclical Program contract, you must report these ***successions-in-interest*** to the county committee by **Sept. 30,** so that a final determination can be made on who is eligible for the program on the farm.

Changes that qualify as a succession-in-interest include:

- A sale of land
- A change of operator or producer, including a an increase or decrease in the number of partners
- A foreclosure, bankruptcy or involuntary loss of the farm.
- A change in producer shares to reflect changes in the producer's share of the crop(s) that were originally approved on the contract.

If a succession-in-interest has taken place, you, as the "predecessor," are required to refund any advance DCP payments you received for the affected base acres before a payment can be made to the "successor."

Not reporting a succession-in-interest can result in contract termination and a loss of program benefits for all producers involved.

Selected Interest Rates for September 2010	
Farm Operating - Direct	2.375%
Farm Ownership - Direct	4.375%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.500%
Emergency – Actual Loss	3.750%

Dates to Remember	
Sept 15	Signup for Durum Wheat Quality Program Ends
Sept 30	Succession in Interest Report to County Committee
Sept 30	SURE Application Deadline
Sept 30	Crop Insurance Deadline for Wheat as well as other crops. Check RMA for more details.
Sept 30	NAP Deadline for Fall Canola or Fall planted Seed Crops
Dec 1	NAP for Perennial Crops and Honey

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