May 2011

Gooding/Camas FSA Office

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2011 FSA County Committee Elections

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees is important to ALL farmers and ranchers, whether beginning or long-established, large or small. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

County Committee (COC) members are a critical component of FSA operations. The intent is to have the COC reflect the makeup of the producers and to represent all constituents. This means wherever possible, minorities, women or lower income producers need to be on the committee to speak for these underrepresented groups.

County committees provide local input on commodity price support loans and payments, conservation programs, incentive, indemnity and disaster payments for some commodities, emergency programs and payment eligibility.

FSA county committee members apply their judgment and knowledge to make local decision and operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal rules, regulations and laws.

Election Period

June 15, 2011 – COC nomination period begins.

Aug. 1, 2011 - COC nomination forms (FSA-669A) due at the local USDA Service Center

Nov. 4, 2011 – COC ballots mailed to eligible voters

Dec. 5, 2011 - Last day to return completed COC ballots to the USDA Service Center

Jan. 2, 2012 - Newly elected COC members take office

To hold office as a county committee member, a person must meet the basic eligibility criteria as follows:

- Participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA
- Be eligible to vote in a county committee election
- Reside in the LAA in which the person is a candidate

Candidates must not have been:

- Removed or disqualified from the office of county committee member, alternate or employee
- Removed for cause from any public office or have been convicted of fraud, larceny, embezzlement or any other felony
- Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services.

For more information about county committee elections, contact the county office staff.

Nominations

Nominees must complete and sign form FSA-669A available at USDA Service Centers and online at: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/fsa0669a_commiteeelectform.pdf

Nomination forms for the 2011 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business on Aug. 1, 2011.

Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in an FSA program may be nominated for candidacy.

Who Can Vote

Agricultural producers of legal voting age (18 years) may be eligible to vote if they participate or cooperate in any FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm may also be eligible to vote. More information about voting eligibility

SURE Program

The Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disasters that incurred in the crop years 2008 through September 30, 2011. To be eligible for SURE payments, a producer is required to obtain crop insurance on all crops in all counties or, if crop insurance is not available, to participate in the Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP) except for grazed acreage. However, crop insurance or NAP coverage is no longer required for crops that are not of economic significance or those where the administrative fee required to buy NAP coverage exceeds 10% of the value of the coverage.

Eligible farmers and ranchers who meet the definition of Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, or Beginning Farmer or Rancher are exempt from the risk management purchase requirement.

The following are the conditions that trigger SURE payments:

•At least one crop of economic significance must suffer a 10% production loss due to an eligible disaster condition. (These are crops that contributed or would have contributed at least 5% or more of the total expected revenue from all crops on the farm.)

•Producers in counties declared disaster counties by the Secretary of Agriculture, or in contiguous counties, or those who show proof of an individual loss of at least 50% are eligible to receive SURE payments for crop producer or crop quality losses. Losses are measured with consideration to the whole-farm revenue, which includes crop insurance indemnities and commodity program payments, so that producers are not paid more than once for the same loss.

A SURE calculator is available at: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=diap&topic=sure. The calculator is not official, but is intended for educational use. A fact sheet and backgrounder are also available online.

Emergency Assistance for 2010 Losses

More than $8 million in disaster assistance will be issued to livestock, honeybee and farm-raised fish producers that suffered losses in 2010 because of disease, adverse weather or other conditions. The aid will come from the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP).

ELAP sign-up for 2011 losses is also under way. Producers with 2011 losses must file an ELAP application no later than Jan. 30, 2012. They also must file a notice of loss within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent to the producer or by Oct. 31, 2011, whichever is earlier. ELAP benefits related to 2011 losses are expected to be issued in early 2012.

Hispanic and Women Farmers

A process to resolve the claims of Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who believe they were discriminated against when seeking USDA farm loans is being established.

If you believe that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) improperly denied farm loan benefits to you during certain time periods between 1981 and 2000 because you are Hispanic, or because you are female, you may be eligible to apply for compensation.

For additional information on this claims process and other settlement issues contact:

Hispanic and Women Farmer Claims Process
:www.farmerclaims.gov or 1-888-508-4429

Pigford - Black Farmers Discrimination Litigation
www.blackfarmercase.com or 1-866-950-5547

Keepseagle - Native American Farmers Class Action Settlement
www.IndianFarmClass.com or 1-888-233-5506

NAP Records

Production records for individual crops need to be filed at the FSA office to establish an approved NAP yield. If this is your first year in NAP, you can provide production and acreage information from prior years to establish your yield. If you participated in NAP in previous years, you must report your production and acreage on a yearly basis to keep your yield up-to-date. Records submitted must be reliable or verifiable and need to show crop disposition. We recommend producers submit production records as soon as harvest is complete. **All production records must be submitted by the subsequent crop year's final acreage reporting date.**

NAP Loss Filing

The CCC-576, Notice of Loss, is used to report failed acreage and prevented planting and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. Timely filing the Notice of Loss is required for ALL CROPS INCLUDING GRASSES. For losses on crops covered by the Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and crop insurance, you must file a CCC-576 (notice of loss) in the FSA County Office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent.

If filing for prevented planting, an acreage report and CCC-576 must be filed within 15 calendar days of the final planting date for the crop.

AGI and the IRS

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 will be required from each producer or payment recipient for the tax review process. No actual tax data will be included in the verification report that IRS sends to FSA.

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 to avoid interruption of program benefits. These forms may be obtained from local FSA and NRCS offices.

Farm Reconstitutions

At FSA, farms are "constituted" to group all tracts having the same owner and the same operator under one farm serial number. When changes in ownership or operation take place, a farm reconstitution is necessary. If multiple owners and/or operators do not agree about program participation and want to separate acres by programs, for example to enter only a segment of property into the new ACRE program, then producers should inquire about a reconstitution of the farm at the local FSA office.

The reconstitution—or recon—is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. NOTE: to be effective for the current year, recons must be requested by August 1, 2011 for farms enrolled in specific programs.

Farm Loan Programs

The Farm Service Agency is committed to providing family farmers with credit to meet their business needs. Farmers having trouble obtaining financing have both direct and guaranteed loan options.

Farmers who have had a setback and whose lenders are reluctant to extend or renew credit can ask their lender if they qualify for an FSA loan guarantee

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 $1,119,000. Producers are encouraged to apply early so that a loan can be processed and funded in a timely manner prior to production credit needs.

FSA employees will help you complete the necessary application and other forms, and help you understand what information is required, where to find it or who to contact to get it. To find out more about FSA loan programs, contact the county office staff.

NOTICE TO HISPANIC AND/OR WOMEN FARMERS OR RANCHERS

COMPENSATION FOR CLAIMS OF DISCRIMINATION

If you believe that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) improperly denied farm loan benefits to you between 1981 and 2000 because you are Hispanic, or because you are female, you may be eligible to apply for compensation.

To register your name to receive a claims packet, call the Farmer and Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429 or visit: www.farmerclaims.gov

The claims package will have detailed information about the eligibility and claims process.

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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Did Your Bank Change?

If you have changed banks and not notified FSA, your payment could be delayed. Payments are now electronically transferred into your bank account. If we are not aware of changes to your account and have incorrect routing numbers, there could be problems. For FSA to make timely payments, you need to notify the office if you close your account or if another financial institution purchases your bank. It is important that any changes in producer's account such as type of account, bank mergers, routing number or account numbers, be provided to the county office promptly to avoid possible payment delay.

Selected Interest Rates for May 2011	
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%
Direct Farm Operating Loans	2.625%
Direct Farm Ownership and Conservation Loans	5.000%
Farm Ownership Loans - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.500%
Emergency Loans	3.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loans	

Dates to Remember	
June 1	Deadline for Farm Record Changes
June 1	DCP Sign Up Ends
June 1	ACRE Sign Up Ends
June 30	Crop Reporting Deadline
Continues	Continuous Conservation Reserve program

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