



March 2011

On Line Only

Jefferson/Clark FSA

Service Center

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Hours:

Monday – Friday

8:00 am - 4:30 pm

CED:

Ben Evans

Staff:

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County Committee:

Lee Burtenshaw

George Ellsworth

Robert McCulloch

Kevin Small

Andy Wagoner

Advisor:

Susan Stewart

Jefferson/Clark County

Committee Meetings dates:

April 12, 2011

May 10, 2011

June 14, 2011

July 12, 2011

August 9, 2011

September 13, 2011

October 11, 2011

November 8, 2011

December 13, 2011

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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. and 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.

CREP, SAFE, & Continuous CRP Available

Environmentally sensitive acreage may be eligible for enrollment in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Continuous CRP is available in every state during the fiscal year. These targeted programs remain funded, and continue to provide increased environmental benefit in select areas.

Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) Enrollment

Applications for GRP in FY 2011 must be submitted by March 18, 2011. Rental contracts can be for periods of 10, 15, or 20 years. Permanent easements are also available for producers interested in a long term conservation arrangement. For more information about GRP rental rates or easement payments, contact your nearest USDA Service Center.

Marketing Assistance Loans

March 31, 2011 is the last day to apply for Marketing Assistance Loans, for the 2010 crop year, on wheat, barley, corn, and oats.

To be eligible, you must share in the risk of producing the crop and maintain beneficial interest through the term of the loan or until paid. Beneficial interest means retaining the ability to make decisions about the commodity; responsibility for loss or damage to the commodity; and title to the commodity. Once beneficial interest in a commodity is lost, the commodity is ineligible for loan, even if you regain beneficial interest.

For commodities to be eligible they must

have been produced by an eligible producer, be in existence, and in a storable condition, and be merchantable for food, feed, or other uses as determined by CCC. 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 Program to be eligible for commodity loans.

Violating provisions of a marketing assistance loan may trigger administrative actions, such as assessing liquidated damages, calling the loan, and denial of future farm-stored loans.

The most common violations are removing or disposing of a commodity being used as loan collateral without prior authorization and providing an incorrect quantity certification.

DCP Signup

Signup for the 2011 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment (DCP) Program continues until June 1, 2011.

FSA computes DCP Program payments using base acres and payment yields established for each farm. Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. For 2011, you may request to receive advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment for each commodity associated with the farm. Counter-cyclical payment for a commodity is only issued if the effective price for a commodity is below the commodity's target price.

ACRE

The ACRE Program provides a safety net based on state revenue losses and acts in place of the price-based safety net of counter-cyclical payments under DCP. The June 1, 2011, signup deadline is mandatory for all participants. FSA will not accept any late-filed applications.

A payment is based on a revenue guarantee calculated using a 5-year average state yield and the most recent 2-year national price for each eligible commodity. For 2011, the 2-year price average will be based on the 2009 and 2010 crop years.

An ACRE payment is issued when both the state and the farm have incurred a revenue loss. The payment is based on 83.3% (85% in 2012) of the farm's planted acres times the difference between the state ACRE guarantee and the state revenue times the ratio of the farm's yield divided by the state expected yield. The total number of planted acres for which a producer may

receive ACRE payments may not exceed the total base on the farm. Participants in ACRE will forgo counter-cyclical payments. Also a farm's direct payment is reduced by 20% and marketing assistance loan rates are reduced by 30%.

The decision to enroll in the ACRE Program is irrevocable. The owner of the farm and all producers on the farm must agree to enroll in ACRE. Once enrolled, the farm shall be enrolled for that initial crop year and will remain in ACRE through the 2012 crop year.



CRP Expiring?

Idaho has over 117,000 acres of CRP expiring in 2011. 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 re-enroll the land in the next general CRP sign-up. 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 grain or 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.

NAP Enrollment

Producers must apply for coverage before a disaster strikes. Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) applications for coverage must be filed using Form CCC-471 and pay the applicable service fees by the closing date. Application closing dates vary by crop. March 15th is the sales closing date for spring seeded crops, and December 1st, is the sales closing date for alfalfa and grasses in Jefferson and Clark Counties. The \$250 per crop is due when the application is filed.

Note that insurance coverage on all crops is required to remain eligible for the agency's Disaster Assistance Programs such as SURE, LFP, TAP, and ELAP. Producers must purchase at least catastrophic (CAT) level of insurance for all insurable crops.

NAP is a federally funded program that provides coverage to producers for non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory or prevented planting occurs due to natural disasters. Crops eligible for NAP coverage are those for which crop insurance is not available, including fruits and vegetables, aquaculture, pecans, turf grass, and forage crops just to name a few.

More information about NAP may be found on the FSA web site located at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>



Hay Net – Your No-Cost Online Buying and Selling Market

Hay Net is a free, online hay locator service on the FSA website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet>. Producers who want to buy or sell hay can post their ads at no charge to make connections. Hay Net is a popular site for farmers and ranchers who have an emergency need, such as the one caused by the current extreme winter conditions. Individual ads can be posted by producers after completing a simple online registration form.



BCAP – Two Phases

There are two categories of assistance in the Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP). The first category provides financial assistance to producers or entities that deliver eligible biomass material to approved biomass conversion facilities (BCF) for use as heat, power, bio-based products or bio-fuels. Initial assistance will be for the collection, harvest, storage and transportation (CHST) costs associated with the delivery of eligible materials.

Producers who harvest, transport and store these materials can apply for FSA matching payments under the CHST. An application must be submitted before the eligible material is sold and delivered to a BCF. After the product is delivered, a producer must provide FSA with documentation of product quantity, quality and payment rate. County offices will validate payment requests with information in the county office.

In the second category of BCAP, incentives are provided to producers who enter into contracts with the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) to produce eligible biomass crops on contract acres within BCAP project areas. For this phase, Project Area Proposals are required and must be submitted to FSA for approval. For more information, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/bcap.

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2011 Dates to Remember!



- Ongoing** : Continuous CRP signup
- March 14th** : CRP Sign-up Begins
- March 15th** : NAP sales closing date for spring seeded crops
- March 31st** : Final date to request loan/LDP on 2010 crop barley, wheat, canola, honey, oats, rapeseed, flaxseed, and sesame seed
- April 12th** : COC Meeting - 1:00 p.m. at the Rigby Service Center
- April 15th** : Final date to apply for CRP General Sign-up
- May 10th** : COC Meeting - 1:00 p.m. at the Rigby Service Center
- May 30th** : Office Closed for Memorial Day
- May 31th** : Final date to request loan/LDP on 2010 crop corn, dry peas, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, safflower seed, small chickpeas, soybeans, sunflower seed
- June 1st** : Deadline to sign into DCP/ACRE
- June 30th** : Crop reporting deadline
- June 30th** : Deadline to provide production evidence for producers' with NAP Insurance
- July 4th** : Office Closed for the Independence Day
- July 15th** : Deadline to provide production evidence for producers enrolled in the ACRE Program
- July 29th** : Deadline to apply for the SURE Program for 2009 crop year losses
- August 1st** : Deadline to Request Recons for farms enrolled in DCP/ACRE
- September 1st** : Office Closed for Labor Day

March 2011 Interest Rates

- 2.500% Farm Operating – direct
- 4.875% Farm Ownership – Direct and Conservation Loans
- 1.500% Farm Ownership – Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher
- 3.750% Emergency

- 1.250% Commodity Loans

- 2.875% FSFL (Farm Storage Facility Loans) with 7-year loan terms
- 3.500% FSFL with 10-year loan terms
- 3.875% FSFL with 12-year loan terms