



June 2010

# Lewis County FSA News

## Lewis County USDA Service Center

**Lewis County FSA**  
521 Oak St, Room 9  
Nezperce ID 83543  
208-937-2291 (phone)  
208-937-2234 (fax)  
[www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)

**Hours**  
Monday - Friday  
7:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**County Committee**  
David Baldus  
Nathan Riggers  
Dennis Behler  
Steve Meek

**Staff**  
Karel Wemhoff, CED  
Vicky Riggers, PT  
Jennifer Lux, PT  
Justin Allen, PT

FSA Committee meetings are open to the public. Regular COC meetings are held the second Thursday of each month at the Nezperce USDA Service Center, beginning at 8:00 a.m.



## Tree Assistance Program Signup

Tree Assistance Program (TAP) sign-up for orchardists and nursery tree growers began Monday, May 10, 2010, at local Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices.

TAP provides help to orchardists and nursery tree growers who produce trees, bushes and vines for commercial purposes to replant or rehabilitate trees, bushes and vines damaged or destroyed by natural disasters. The 2008 Farm Bill expanded eligibility to include Christmas tree and nursery tree growers that were ineligible under prior legislation. Trees grown for pulp or timber are not eligible.

To be eligible producers must have suffered more than a 15 percent death loss due to the natural disaster after adjustment for normal mortality. TAP is a cost-reimbursement program, with payments covering up to 70 percent of replant costs and 50 percent of pruning, removal and other salvaging costs for replacing or salvaging damaged trees.

Producers can receive assistance for up to 500 acres of trees, bushes or vines. Producers must also have purchased a policy or plan of insurance under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, or for 2008, obtained a waiver of the risk management purchase requirement through the buy-in provision. Eligible losses must have occurred on or after Jan. 1, 2008, and before Oct. 1, 2011.

For more information on the new TAP program, contact your county FSA office or the website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

## Transition Incentives Program

The Transition Incentives Program (TIP) was created to encourage retired or retiring owners or operators to transition their Conservation Reserve Program

(CRP) acres to beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers.

TIP sign up began on Monday, May 17, 2010. If all program requirements are met, TIP provides annual rental payments to the retiring farmer for up to two additional years after the date of the expiration of the CRP contract, provided the transition is not to a family member.

To be eligible, TIP requires that the retired or retiring farmer or rancher:

- Have land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) that is in the last year of the contract.
- Agree to allow the beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher make conservation and land improvements.
- Agree to sell, or have a contract to sell, or agree to long-term lease (a minimum of 5 years) the land under CRP contract to a beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher by Oct. 1 of the year the CRP contract expires.

Generally, TIP only applies to contracts that expire on September 30, 2010, or later. However, retired or retiring owners or operators with CRP contracts that expired on September 30, 2008, and September 30, 2009, may be eligible to enroll in TIP. To learn more about this program, producers interested in applying and participating in TIP should visit their USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) county office or [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

## Special Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment to attend or participate in meetings or events sponsored by the Farm Service Agency. If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in one of our events, please call the FSA county office and we will be happy to make any needed arrangements.

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## Farm Loan Programs

FSA offers loans for farmers and ranchers to purchase farmland and finance agricultural operations. FSA loan programs are designed to help producers who are temporarily unable to obtain private or commercial credit. In many cases, applicants are beginning farmers who have insufficient net worth to qualify for financing through a commercial lender. In other instances, borrowers might have suffered setbacks from natural disasters or might be persons with limited resources.

Farm ownership loans or farm operating loans may be obtained as direct loans up to a maximum of \$300,000. Guaranteed loans can reach a maximum of \$1,112,000. Emergency loans are for farmers who may have suffered physical or production losses in disaster areas designated by a Presidential or Secretarial disaster declaration. Rural Youth Loans, Loans to Beginning Farmers and loans for socially disadvantaged applicants are also available through FSA.

For details contact the county office staff for an appointment with a farm loan officer.

## GIS

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) through FSA has established the Common Land Unit (CLU) that is a digital map of farms and fields. This GIS (Geographic Information Systems) data layer is used by all field service centers throughout the country. The acreage determined in GIS is the field acreage used in all FSA programs. Using GIS provides for more consistent and more accurate land measurements, such as field acreage and acreage boundaries of conservation practices used in CRP, CREP and SAFE programs.

In 2009 all of Idaho was flown with high quality digital imagery under the National Agricultural Imagery Program (NAIP). Maps can be created in either paper or digital format for FSA customers or the public.

CLU data and NAIP imagery can be used in precision agriculture applications offered through various agri-businesses.

More information about the Common Land Unit and NAIP imagery can be found by visiting on-line, APFO (Aerial Photography Field Office) at [www.apfo.usda.gov](http://www.apfo.usda.gov)

## FSA Signature Policy

Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office staff by either spouse. There are a couple of exceptions to the rule: spouses may not sign on behalf of each other for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities; and individual signatures are required on certain Farm Loan Program and Farm Storage Facility Loan documents.

For more clarification on spousal signature authority, contact your local FSA office.

## Farm Reconstitutions

For FSA program purposes, tracts having the same owner and the same operator are grouped under one farm serial number. When changes in ownership or operation take place, a farm reconstitution is needed. The reconstitution—or recon—is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. The following are the different methods used when doing a farm recon:

**Estate Method** — the division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate;

**Designation of Landowner Method** — may be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold or ownership transferred to two or more persons; (3) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; or (4) a tract is sold or ownership is transferred to two or more persons. In order to use this method the land sold must have been owned for at least three years (or a waiver granted), and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding;

**DCP Cropland Method** — the division of bases in the same proportion that the DCP cropland for each resulting tract relates to the DCP cropland on the parent tract;

**Default Method** — the division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system.

## SURE Program

The Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disasters that occurred in 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). Exceptions apply to grazed acreage and 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 also exempt from the risk management purchase requirement.

Producers in counties that have been declared a disaster by the Secretary of Agriculture may be eligible for benefits if at least one crop of economic significance suffered a 10% production loss due to an eligible disaster condition. A 'crop of economic significance' is defined as a crop that has contributed or would have contributed at least 5% or more of the total expected revenue from all crops on the farm. Producers in counties that are contiguous to a declared county also may be eligible if at least one significant crop suffered at least a 10% loss.

Producers who are not in or contiguous to a declared county may still be eligible for benefits if they can show proof of an individual loss of at least 50%.

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.

## Payment Eligibility

Regulations require each person applying for benefits under a program administered by FSA must first be determined eligible by filing an accurate farm operating plan reflecting the manner in which the individual/entity conducts business. Payment eligibility and payment limitation determinations may be initiated by the COC or requested by the producer. Once filed, these papers are brought forward each year unless changes occur requiring an amendment or a new form. It is the responsibility

of the producer to inform the County Office when such a change in their operation has occurred. Changes that affect determinations include:

- Actively Engaged – contributions of land, capital, equipment, active personal labor and/or active personal management
- Cash rent tenant – obtaining a lease with cash rent terms
- Foreign Person – buying, selling or leasing to/from a person who is not a citizen of the United States.

Entities participating in programs earning benefits are required to provide the names, addresses and tax identification numbers of all members.

All payment and eligibility forms submitted are subject to spot check through an end-of-year review. If selected, producers will be asked to provide documentation to substantiate the contributions claimed on the eligibility form such as management, capital and equipment contributions, and labor records.

No program benefits subject to limitation will be provided until all required forms are completed and submitted to the County Office, and necessary eligibility and payment limitation determinations are made.

Current limitations per person are:

### **Commodity Programs:**

Counter-Cyclical and ACRE	\$65,000 <sup>1/</sup>
Direct Payments	\$40,000 <sup>2/</sup>

### **Conservation:**

CRP Annual Rental	\$50,000
ECP (per disaster)	\$200,000
Env Quality Incentive Program (All contracts 2009-2012)	\$300,000
Grassland Reserve Program	\$50,000
Wildlife Habitat Incentive	\$50,000
Wetland Reserve Program	\$50,000

### **Disaster:**

ELAP, LIP, LFP, SURE	\$100,000
Non-Insured Assistance	\$100,000
Tree Assistance Program	\$100,000

### **Price Support:**

Loan Deficiency Payment,	No Limits
Marketing Assistance Loan, Marketing Loan Gain	

## Controlled Substances

Program participants convicted under federal or state law of any planting, cultivating, growing, producing, harvesting or storing a controlled substance are ineligible for program payments and benefits.

Participants convicted of any federal or state offense consisting of the distribution (trafficking) of a controlled substance shall, at the discretion of the court, be ineligible:

- Up to 5 years after the first conviction
- Up to 10 years after the second conviction
- Permanently for a third or subsequent conviction.

Program participants convicted of federal or state offense for the possession of a controlled substance shall be ineligible, at the discretion of the court, for any or all program benefits, as follows:

- up to 1 year upon the first conviction
- up to 5 years after a second or subsequent conviction.

## Banking Changes?

Almost all Farm Service Agency payments are made electronically using Direct Deposit. This innovation has cut down on the number of missing and late payments and reduced the time required to move funds. It has been calculated that having a problem with a payment is 20 times greater with checks than with Direct Deposit. Another benefit is that Direct Deposit to your account can be made within 48 hours.

To keep the system running smoothly, it's critical to keep the county office staff up to date on changes you might make in your financial institutions.

If you have changed accounts or institutions that might affect the direct deposit of your FSA payments, contact the FSA county office so we can update our files to insure continued uninterrupted service.

### Selected Interest Rates for June 2010

90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%
Farm Operating - Direct	3.125%
Farm Ownership - Direct	5.125%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50%
Emergency	3.75%

### Dates to Remember

June 30	Last day to file crop reports
	2009 production evidence for NAP is due
	Production records for ACRE are due
July 5	Office closed in observance of Independence Day
September 6	Office closed in observance of Labor Day

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance programs. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202)-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."