



# NEWSLETTER



## Chouteau County FSA Office

**February 2011**

1210 25<sup>th</sup> Street  
PO Box 309  
Fort Benton, MT

Phone: 406-622-5401  
FAX: 406-622-3728  
www.fsa.usda.gov/mt

### Hours:

Monday - Friday  
8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

### County Office Staff:

Bill Evans, CED  
Jim Freeman  
Tracy Steinbacher  
Debbie Cappis  
Sharon Roudebush  
Kistia Golie  
Vanessa Furuli  
Janet Smith

### County Committee Members:

Rod DeBruycker  
Mark Gasvoda  
Charles Davis  
Sarah Robertson

### Next County Committee Meeting:

February 16, 2011

## FSA INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS TO BE HELD:

The Chouteau County FSA office will be conducting informational meetings to assist producers in understanding the regulations for many of the programs offered by our agency. During these meetings, we will discuss the 2009 SURE (crop disaster program), DCP/ ACRE, CRP, Farm Storage Facility Loans, Commodity Loans, NAP, Livestock Indemnity Program, and the Livestock Forage Program. The meeting schedule is as follows:

- Tuesday March 1<sup>st</sup> – Big Sandy High School auditorium – 1:30 p.m.
- Monday March 7<sup>th</sup> – Fort Benton Elementary School auditorium – 4:00 p.m.

## 2009 SURE PROGRAM

Farm Service Agency will be accepting applications for the 2009 SURE (crop disaster) program through July 29, 2011. To potentially qualify for SURE benefits, a producer must have:

- Suffered a 10% or greater production loss on at least one crop of “economic significance” to the farming operation. A crop is considered to be of “economic significance” if the expected value of the crop was at least 5% of the total expected value of all crops intended for mechanical harvest in the farming operation.
- Carried MPCl or NAP coverage on ALL crop of “economic significance” to the farming operation in 2009. Note: Certain exceptions to the insurance requirement apply to beginning farmers, limited resource producers, and socially disadvantaged producers. An additional exception to the insurance requirement applies to NAP crops with an expected value of under \$9090.90.

Any producer that feels that they met the requirements listed above should contact the FSA office to be placed on a list of potential applicants. FSA staff will then prepare the SURE paperwork, and contact the producer when the application is ready for signature. All SURE applications must be signed by July 29, 2011.

## **FSA COUNTY COMMITTEE**

Charles (Chuck) Davis from Geraldine was recently elected to represent farmers and ranchers from the Geraldine/Highwood area of Chouteau County on the FSA county committee. The election results were as follows:

- Chuck Davis – regular member
- Brent Hanford – 1<sup>st</sup> alternate

The Chouteau County FSA staff and county committee would like to thank Carl Wishman for 9 years of dedicated service to the FSA committee. Carl was an exceptional committee member, and a voice of reason at all times. During Carl's tenure on the FSA committee, we were confronted with many difficult and/or complex issues. Carl always took the time to thoroughly understand the issues, and did his best to ensure that our programs were carried out in a fair and equitable manner. All Chouteau County producers, not just those in the Geraldine/Highwood area of the county, benefited from Carl's service to the Farm Service Agency.

## **NAP COVERAGE DEADLINE FOR 2011 CROP YEAR**

The Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides a risk management option to producers of crops for which Multi-Peril Crop Insurance (MPCI) is not available. The application deadline for 2011 NAP coverage is March 15, 2011. Producers who choose to obtain NAP coverage for 2011 must sign form CCC-471, application for coverage, and pay the applicable service fee by the sales closing deadline. The NAP service fee is \$250 per crop, with a maximum amount due of \$750 per producer per county. Service fees may be waived for limited-resource producers. The NAP provides coverage at 50% of the expected crop yield and 55% of the expected crop price. Examples frequently covered NAP crops would include (but are not limited to): small grains intended for hay; small grain/pea hay; grass intended for grazing; grass hay (less than 5% alfalfa); corn; beans; flax; potatoes; and millet.

## **FOREIGN BUYERS NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA. All individuals who are not U.S. citizens, and have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form (FSA-153) could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, Realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

## **REPORT CHANGES TO YOUR FARMING OPERATION**

If you have bought or sold land, or if you have added or dropped rented land from your operation, make sure you report the changes to FSA as soon as possible. You must provide FSA with a copy of the deed or recorded land contract for purchased property. Failure to maintain accurate records with FSA on all land you have an interest in can lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties. Making the record changes now will save you time in the spring.

## **HIGHLY ERODIBLE LAND AND WETLAND COMPLIANCE PROVISIONS**

Landowners and operators are reminded that in order to receive payments from USDA, compliance with Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions are required. Farmers with HEL determined soils are reminded of tillage, crop residue, and rotation requirements as specified per their conservation plan. Producers are to notify the USDA Farm Service Agency prior to sod busting, new breaking, conducting land clearing or drainage projects to insure compliance. Failure to obtain advance approval for any of these situations can result in the loss of eligibility and all Federal payments.

## **COMMODITY LOANS**

Commodity loans, also referred to as Marketing Assistance Loans, are available to producers who share in the risk of producing the crop. To be eligible, you must maintain beneficial interest in the crop through the time of application. Beneficial interest means retaining the ability to make decisions about the commodity, responsibility for all risk of loss or damage to the commodity, and title to the commodity. The deadline to request a 2010-crop loan from for wheat, barley, oats, flax, or honey is March 31, 2011.

## **FARM LOANS TO BEGINNING FARMERS AND RANCHERS**

FSA sets aside targeted funding to assist beginning farmers and/or members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more that 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 % of the county's average size.

For more information on these programs, either contact the local FSA office, or visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)

## **2011 DCP AND ACRE ENROLLMENT PERIOD**

Enrollment for the 2011 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) and ACRE Program has begun, and will continue through June 1, 2011. Advance payments equal to 22 percent of the 2011 DCP or ACRE direct payment are available.. The remaining 78 percent of the direct payment will be issued after October 1, 2011. All producers wishing to enroll in the 2011 DCP or ACRE program are asked to contact the local FSA office to schedule an appointment for enrollment.

## **UNAUTHORIZED DISPOSITION OF LOAN COLLATERAL**

If a producer receives a FSA price support loan for a commodity, and then disposes of that commodity by feeding, selling, or otherwise disposing of it without prior written authorization from FSA, it is considered an unauthorized disposition violation. The financial penalties for unauthorized dispositions are severe, and the producer's name will be placed on a loan violation list for a two-year period. Possible criminal penalties may also result. **Always call before you haul or utilize any grain under loan.**

CHOUTEAU COUNTY FSA OFFICE  
1210 25<sup>th</sup> Street; PO Box 309  
Fort Benton, MT 59442-0309



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**FSA INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS TO BE HELD IN BIG SANDY AND FORT BENTON ON MARCH 1<sup>ST</sup> AND MARCH 7<sup>TH</sup> – SEE PAGE 1 FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**CRP SIGNUP PERIOD #41 ANNOUNCED**

Producers wishing to offer new land, or re-enroll expiring CRP acreage, into the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) may do so from March 14<sup>th</sup> through April 15<sup>th</sup>. CRP signup period #41 will be a competitive bid process, and it is possible that offers for enrollment will not be accepted by FSA. More information concerning this bid period will be provided once the specific guidelines are released.

**MPCI AND/OR NAP REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTAIN DISASTER PROGRAMS**

With the 2011 MPCI and NAP sales closing dates occurring on March 15<sup>th</sup>, it is extremely important that all producers understand the insurance requirements for FSA disaster programs. The SURE program requires that producers obtain MPCI or NAP coverage on all crops of “economic significance” to the farming operation. Failure to insure an “economically significant” crop will result in complete ineligibility for SURE benefits on ALL crops. The Livestock Forage Program (LFP) requires that livestock producers obtain either MPCI or NAP coverage on their grazing acreage. Exceptions apply for beginning farmers and ranchers, limited resource producers, and socially disadvantaged producers. The specific insurance requirements for each program were listed in detail in our September 2010 newsletter.

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