



NEWSLETTER



2011 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) Signup Underway, Deadline is June 1

Enrollment for the 2011 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) has begun and will continue through **June 1, 2011**. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) urges producers to make use of the eDCP automated website to sign up, or producers can visit the FSA office to complete their 2011 DCP contract. Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. FSA began to issue advance direct payments beginning Dec. 1, 2010.

2011 Average Crop Revenue Election Program (ACRE) Option: June 1 Signup deadline

The Average Crop Revenue Election Program (ACRE) 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. A farm's 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. The **June 1, 2011** deadline is mandatory for all ACRE and DCP participants. FSA will not accept late-filed applications. An ACRE payment is issued when both the state and the farm have incurred a revenue loss. In exchange for participating in ACRE, a farm's direct payment is reduced by 20 percent, and marketing assistance loan rates are reduced by 30 percent. 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.

2011 Acreage Reports Filing Deadline is July 15

County offices are in the process of getting the 2011 compliance map packets together for acreage reporting purposes. The compliance maps will be mailed or made available at the FSA county office for producers. Please follow the instructions closely for completing the maps to ensure that all the cropland and rangeland is reported if required for program eligibility. The deadline to file 2011 acreage reports is July 15, 2011.

Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE) Signup for 2009 Crop Year Underway, Ends July 29

Signup for the 2009 SURE program began on Jan. 10, 2011 and will end on **July 29, 2011**. To be eligible for SURE a producer must have at least a 10 percent production loss on a crop of economic significance and a policy or plan of insurance under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for all economically significant crops. 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.

Producers that have a farming interest physically located in a county that was declared a primary disaster county by the Agriculture Secretary under a Secretarial Disaster Designation or a contiguous county and meet the above criteria are eligible for SURE. In the absence of the Secretarial Disaster Designation producers may be eligible if they suffer at least a 50% production loss on the entire SURE farm due to a natural disaster. For more information, contact the county office.

Jefferson-Madison-Silver Bow County FSA Office

April 2011

Address:
3 Whitetail Rd
Whitehall, MT 59759

Office:
(406) 287-3262
Fax: (406) 287-3205

Website:
www.fsa.usda.gov/mt

Hours: 7:00 am to 5:00 pm
Monday to Friday

FSA Office Personnel:
Bonita Kober, CED
Kathleen Ballard, PT
Amanda Lucas, PT
Theresa Casagrande, TF
Alan Jenne, FLM

County Committee Members

Janet Endecott, Chair
Lillie J Carmody, Vice Chair
Heath Rieder, Member
Jack Kambich, Member
Kirk Amos, Member

Agricultural Lending Opportunities:

Questions regarding obtaining credit to start or enlarge a farming or ranching operation; financing agricultural operating expenses; or livestock, machinery purchases may call the following at (406)683-3830:
Alan Jenne, FLM
Jenny Rose, PT

Spring Grazing on Conservation Reserve Program Acres

The 2011 grazing period for managed grazing of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres is March 15th through May 14th. CRP participants who want to graze their CRP contracts this spring must sign up at the FSA county office. Grazing cannot begin until the participant (s) receives written approval from the local FSA county committee or its designee. Spring managed grazing must end before May 15th, which is the start of Montana's Primary Nesting and Broodrearing Season.

Participants may graze CRP acres based on the rotation period of once every three years and other limitations that are included in their Conservation Plan of Operations. Producers wishing to graze CRP acres must first receive written notification of approval from the FSA county committee before managed grazing can begin. Livestock producers, who rent or lease acreage from the CRP participant, shall sign a statement agreeing not to sublease the CRP acreage and receive notification of approval from the FSA county committee, a copy of which they should provide to the CRP participant. All livestock must be removed from the CRP acreage when the calculated AUM's are utilized, but no later than May 14th for spring grazing. CRP participants will be assessed a payment reduction for managed grazing which is calculated by taking the number of acres grazed, times the CRP per acre annual rental payment, times 25 percent.

Current USDA Settlements and Non-Judicial Claims Process:

Native American Farmers & Ranchers Settlement Agreement (Keepseagle)

If you are a Native American who was denied a Farm Loan or Loan Servicing by the USDA between Jan. 1, 1981 and Nov. 24, 1999, you may be eligible for benefits from a Class Action Settlement. To request a Claims Package or for more information, call 1-888-233-5506 or visit www.IndianFarmClass.com.

Non-Judicial Claims Process for Hispanic & Women Farmers & Ranchers

If you believe that 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.

African American Farmers Settlement Agreement (Pigford II)

If you are an African-American farmer who (a) submitted a request to file a late claim on or between Oct. 13, 1999 and June 18, 2008, under the 1999 USDA settlement in the earlier class action known as Pigford v. Glickman ("Pigford"), and (b) who did not receive a merits determination of their discrimination claim, you may be eligible for benefits from a Class Action Settlement. For more information, call 1-866-950-5547 or 1-866-472-7826 or visit www.blackfarmercase.com.

Actively Engaged

USDA has amended the requirements of being 'actively engaged' in farming. These rules apply to eligibility for payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) or Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE).

Normally the stockholder or a member of a legal entity **must** make contributions of active personal labor and/or active personal management for the farming operation. The contributions are to be performed on regular basis, must be identifiable, and separate from the contributions of others.

The exception to this rule for a stockholder or member of a legal entity only occurs when both of the following apply:

- At least half of the interest in the legal entity is held by stockholders or members who are providing active personal labor or active personal management; and
- The total direct payments received by the legal entity and each of the members can't exceed \$40,000.

Livestock Indemnity Program

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides assistance to eligible livestock owners and contract growers for eligible livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather including losses due to floods, blizzards, disease, wildfires, extreme heat, and extreme cold. For 2011 losses, producers must file a notice of loss the earlier of either 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock was apparent to the participant or October 31, 2011. A notice of loss can be reported to the office by phone, fax, or e-mail. To be considered eligible, livestock deaths must have died before October 1, 2011, and in the calendar year for which benefits are being requested. An Application for Payment may be filed at any time in 2011, but must be filed no later than 30 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the loss of livestock occurred.

Please contact the county office for additional eligibility requirements. A list of eligible livestock is available at www.fsa.usda.gov/mt.

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 review and approval. For more information, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/bcap.

Farming Operation Changes

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 the office as soon as possible. You need to provide a copy of your 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. Update signature authorization when changes in the operation occur. Please notify the County Office as soon as possible upon the death of a participant, landowner, or member of a participating entity, as it may be necessary to modify contracts for the current year or complete updated eligibility forms. Producers are reminded to contact the office of a change in operations on a farm so that records can be kept current and accurate.

Conservation Loan Program

The Conservation Loan (CL) Program provides farmers with the funds to implement conservation measures on their land. The available limit for a direct CL is \$300,000, and the limit for a guaranteed CL is \$1,119,000. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will work with applicants to develop a conservation plan containing approved conservation practices. Examples of some conservation practices are: water conservation structures, forest cover, permanent pastures, manure digesters and other installations. For more information on a potential Conservation Loan, call the local FSA office and make an appointment with a loan officer.

Beginning and Limited Resource Farmers

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 than 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.

Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit www.fsa.usda.gov

Loans for the Socially Disadvantaged

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for Farm Service Agency loan programs, the FSA has provided priority funding for socially disadvantaged applicants.

A socially disadvantaged applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of a group.

FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

Both operating loans and loans for the purchase or improvement of farms or ranches are available under this category.

Filing a Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Notice-of-Loss

To qualify for assistance under NAP, production losses or prevented planting must have occurred as a result of an eligible cause of loss. An eligible cause of loss is any of the following: damaging weather, such as drought, freeze, hail, excessive moisture, or excessive wind; or adverse natural occurrences, such as earthquake or flood; or a condition related to damaging weather or an adverse natural occurrence, such as excessive heat, disease or insect infestation. Wildlife damage and weeds are **not** considered eligible causes of loss under NAP.

A notice of loss must be provided for prevented planting claims, within 15 calendar days after the final planting date. For low yield claims, the earlier of the following: 15 calendar days after the damaging weather or disaster occurrence or date damage to the specific crop acreage is apparent to the producer for yield losses; or 15 calendar days after the normal harvest date. If a Notice-of-Loss is filed after the established final planting date and the intent is to reseed to another crop intended for harvest, such as barley for grain, which is covered under crop insurance, a NAP payment cannot be received on the original failed crop.

Montana is not a double cropping state. If the intent is to destroy the crop, summer fallow it, or reseed to another crop **not** intended for harvest, representative strips must be left in the field so that a loss adjuster can be sent out closer to normal harvest time to appraise the original seeded crop. In this situation, the original seeded crop would still be eligible for a payment.

July 15, 2011 is the final date for NAP participants to submit crop year 2010 production evidence for crops that were covered in 2010. Failure to submit this documentation may lead to a substantially reduced APH.

For more info, contact the county FSA office.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its program 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 program. (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 to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Special Accommodations:

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in any FSA programs should contact the County FSA Office or the Federal Relay Service at

1-800-877-8339.

Jefferson-Madison-Silver Bow
 FSA Office
 3 Whitetail Rd
 Whitehall, MT 59759



PRESORTED STANDARD
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID
 Bozeman, MT 59715
 PERMIT #54

| Selected Interest Rates - April 2011 | |
|---|--------|
| Farm Operating - Direct | 2.75% |
| Farm Ownership - Direct | 5.00% |
| Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher | 1.50% |
| Conservation Loan | 5.00% |
| Emergency - Actual Loss | 3.75% |
| Farm Storage Facility - 7-year | 2.75% |
| Farm Storage Facility - 10- year | 3.375% |
| Farm Storage Facility - 12- year | 3.625% |
| Commodity Loans 1996- Present | 1.25% |

- FSA: Upcoming Important Dates to Remember:**
- Apr 15** Jefferson & Silver Bow NAP Pull Off Date
 - May 1** Madison NAP Pull Off Date
 - May 14:** Spring grazing on CRP acres ends
 - May 15:** Beginning date of Primary Nesting Season
 - May 31:** Final Date to Request 2010 Marketing Assistance Loans/LDPs on Corn, Dry Peas, Grain Sorghum, Lentils, Mustard Seed, Safflower Seed, Chickpeas, Soybeans, and Sunflower Seed
 - May 30** *CLOSED for Memorial Day*
 - June 1:** 2011 DCP & 2011 ACRE Programs Signup Deadline
 - July 15:** Acreage Reporting Deadline
 - July 15:** 2010 ACRE Production Reporting Deadline
 - July 15:** Final NAP Production Reports Due for 2010
 - July 15:** Final date to file 2010 crop application for NAP Payment
 - July 4** *CLOSED for Independence Day*
 - July 29:** SURE Sign-up Deadline for 2009 Crop Year
 - Continues:** Continuous Conservation Reserve Program



*****Montana FSA Notice to Current Newsletter Recipients*****

Non-active agriculture producers must "opt-in" to receive future newsletters

Effective March 1, 2011, the Montana Farm Service Agency has issued a new newsletter policy geared toward improving FSA newsletter delivery and efficiency to the individual farmers, ranchers and agriculture community. FSA newsletters will continue to be sent to active agriculture producers as determined by the county FSA offices. No action is needed for active producers unless your household or business is receiving duplicate newsletters in which case you should inform your local county FSA office. If you are not an "active" producer but are a landowner or are interested in receiving or continuing to receive a FSA newsletter, you must inform your local county office that you'd like to "Opt-in" and be added to the newsletter mailing list. In addition, you can choose to receive your newsletter electronically. Each newsletter not mailed saves the agency and taxpayer \$0.39. To request the electronic newsletter be emailed to you instead of receiving a newsletter through mail, please contact your county FSA office.

**Information on programs administered by FSA in Montana, the 2011 FSA Program Handbook, state news releases and e-newsletters and individual county office newsletters are available at:
www.fsa.usda.gov/mt**