



NEWSLETTER



**Liberty
County FSA Office
18 Main Street
Chester, MT. 59522**

MARCH 1, 2011

Phone 406-759-5128

Fax 406-759-5791

www.fsa.usda.gov/mt

Hours

Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

County Office Staff:

Yvonne Layton PT
Inez Keith PT
Kathy Nahrgang PT
Bonnie Moore Temp Office
Rusty Cowan CED

County Committee

Members:

**John Laird Chair
Craig Henke Vice**

**Martin Lyders Reg. Member
Maureen Wicks Advisor**

Next County Committee

Meeting: 3-9-11 @ 1:00 pm

**Agricultural Lending
Opportunities**

Questions regarding
obtaining credit to start or
enlarge a farming or ranching
operation; financing
agricultural operating
expenses; or livestock,
machinery purchases call:
Ed Daugherty Farm Loan
Manager @ 406-873-5618
Ext 106

**Reasonable
Accommodations:**

Persons with disabilities who
require accommodations to
attend or participate in any
FSA programs should contact
the County Executive Director
at the FSA Office or the
Federal Relay Service at 1-
800-877-8339.

CRP General Signup announced for March 14 to April 15, 2011

General signup for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) will begin on March 14, 2011, and continue through April 15, 2011. During the signup period, Montana farmers and ranchers may offer eligible land for CRP's competitive general signup at their county Farm Service Agency (FSA) office.

Through the 2008 Farm Bill, CRP is authorized for a maximum enrollment of 32 million acres. USDA estimates that contracts on 3.3 million to 6.5 million acres are scheduled to expire annually between now and 2014. 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 are scheduled to become effective Oct. 1, 2011. In Montana, 2.9 million acres of the state's 18,721,501 cropland acres are currently actively enrolled in the CRP program. Of the state's active CRP acres; 498,661 acres are scheduled to expire on Sept. 30, 2011; 696,523 acres on Sept. 30, 2012 and 638,841 acres on Sept. 30, 2013.

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.

In addition to the general sign-up, FSA's CRP Continuous Sign-up Program is ongoing. Continuous acres represent the most environmentally desirable and sensitive land. For more information, visit www.fsa.usda.gov and view *Conservation Programs*.

2009 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE) Signup Set from Jan. 10 to July 29, 2011

The 2008 Farm Bill created several new disaster programs. One of the programs, the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE), provides financial assistance for crop production and/or quality losses due to a natural disaster. SURE is a total farm revenue disaster program as opposed to the crop disaster programs of previous years, which were primarily production oriented programs. Therefore, all crops that a producer has an interest in are not only evaluated as to the production loss and quality, but revenue as well.

To be eligible for SURE a producer must have at least a 10 percent production loss on a crop of economic significance; 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; and have a farming interest physically located in a county that was declared a primary disaster county or contiguous county by the Agriculture Secretary under a Secretarial Disaster Designation.

Without a Secretarial Disaster Designation, individual producers may be eligible if the actual production on the SURE farm is less than 50 percent of the normal production on the SURE farm due to a natural disaster.

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.

PAYMENTS - SURE will issue payments to an eligible producer in the amount equal to 60% of the difference between the program guarantee and the total farm revenue. SURE will pay up to 90% of the crop's normal production on the farm. If you meet the guidelines of the program in 2009, i.e. a 10% production loss (associated with adverse weather) on one crop of economic significance and crop insurance (CAT/NAP) purchased on all 2009 crops (other than the exceptions previously explained), contact the county FSA office as soon as possible. Signup for 2009 crops began January 10, 2011 and ends on July 29, 2011.

Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation Compliance

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.

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. Eligible livestock deaths must have occurred 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 office for additional eligibility requirements. A list of eligible livestock is available at www.fsa.usda.gov/mt.



FSA Spousal 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 exceptions to the rule, where spouses may not sign on behalf of each other for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities. Individual signatures are also required on certain Farm Loan Program and Farm Storage Facility Loan documents. For more clarification on spousal signature authority, feel free to contact the local FSA office.

Western Salsify, Cheatgrass and ACRE Meeting coming to Liberty County March 25th

Landowners in the Golden Triangle area of north central Montana have the opportunity to participate in several rangeland weed meetings sponsored by Montana State University Extension and the USDA Farm Service Agency. On March 24th and 25th, Dr. Jane Mangold, MSU Extension Rangeland Weed Specialist will present on current research findings from western salsify trials conducted near Fort Benton, as well as speak on her latest cheatgrass research. The western salsify research trials tested the effectiveness of various herbicides, timing of application, and mowing on its control in CRP land. According to Dr. Mangold, "Western salsify is an introduced forb that has been increasing on rangeland and pasture in Montana over the past several years. Very little research has been done on its management because it has not been as problematic in the past as it is today and may be in the future. The more we know and understand about this plant's identification, biology, and ecology, the more likely we will be to effectively manage it when necessary." Cheatgrass is a continuing problem throughout Montana in crop and rangeland situations. In addition to Dr. Mangold, the program in Chester will also include a presentation by Rusty Cowan, FSA County Executive Director on the ACRE program.

The meetings will be held in Chester, Conrad, Fort Benton, and Shelby. On Thursday, March 24th, programs will be held in Conrad in the morning and Shelby in the afternoon. The Conrad program will start at 9 a.m. in the Pondera Shooting Sports Building, located at 972 Granite Road. The Shelby program will start at 2 p.m. in the Marias River Electric Building, located at 910 West Roosevelt Highway 2. On Friday, March 25th, programs will be held in Chester in the morning and Fort Benton in the afternoon. The Chester program will begin at 9 a.m. in the Liberty County Emergency Building, located at 710 West 7th Street. The Fort Benton program will begin at 1:30 p.m. in the EOC Building, located at 2610 North Main Avenue. The programs are free and open to the public and private and commercial pesticide applicator credits are pending.

Special Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact the county FSA office staff directly or by phone.

NAP coverage deadlines for 2011 Crop Year

The Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) was designed to provide financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields or prevented planting occurs as the result of natural disasters. Statutes limit NAP coverage to each commercial crop or agricultural commodity (except livestock), for which the catastrophic (CAT) level of insurance is not available.

The application and sales closing deadline for 2011 NAP coverage is **March 15, 2011**, for all NAP crops other than value loss and honey. The deadline for value-loss crops was Sept. 1, 2010 and Dec. 1, 2010, for honey.

Producers who choose to obtain NAP coverage for 2011 must file a CCC-471 application for coverage and pay the applicable service fee by the sales closing deadline. Eligible producers must pay a service fee of \$250 per crop per administrative county or \$750 per producer per county, not to exceed \$1875 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties. Service fees may be waived for limited-resource producers. Contact Rusty @ 406-759-5128

For the 2011 crop year it is imperative that producers purchase either NAP or a catastrophic (CAT) level of crop insurance for all insurable and non-insurable crops. This is not only for production coverage, but also for eligibility for the new permanent disaster programs created in the 2008 Farm Bill.

In order for producers to be eligible for assistance under the Supplemental Revenue Assistance (SURE) Program and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP), and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP), producers must obtain a plan of insurance for each insurable and non-insurable commodity on the farm, **excluding grazing**. To be eligible for assistance under the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), producers must obtain either coverage under the Pasture, Rangeland, and Forage Rainfall Index pilot Program offered through crop insurance, or NAP coverage, or both on their grazing.

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. Producers are reminded to contact the office of a change in operations on a farm so that records can be kept current and accurate.

Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

FSA's Farm Storage and Facility Loan (FSFL) Program provides low-interest financing for producers of eligible commodities to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities. The maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL is \$500,000. Participants are required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) providing a loan for the remaining eighty five (85) percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent drying and handling equipment. Loan terms of seven, ten, or twelve years are available depending on the amount of the loan.

Interest rates for each term rate may be different and are based on the rate which CCC borrows from the Treasury Department. Payments are available in the form of a partial disbursement and the remaining final disbursement. A partial disbursement of up to 50 percent of the total loan amount will be available, if desired, after a portion of the construction has been completed. The final disbursement will be made when all construction is completed.

An FSFL generally must be approved before the delivery of any materials are accepted and before any site preparation or construction is begun. The following commodities are eligible for farm storage facility loans: corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, oats, wheat, barley, or minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain; corn, grain sorghum, wheat, oats, or barley harvested as other than whole grain; hay; renewable biomass; fruits (including nuts) and vegetables—cold storage facilities. Among other requirements, borrowers are responsible for obtaining annual multi-peril crop insurance or NAP coverage and all-peril insurance on the FSFL structure listing CCC as the loss payee. For more information, contact the county FSA office.

Commodity Loans

2010 commodity loans, also referred to as Marketing Assistance Loans, are available to producers who shared in the risk of producing the crop. To be eligible, you must maintain beneficial interest in the crop through the time of the loan. Loan rates in Liberty County for some of the more common crops are: Winter Wheat \$2.65, Spring Wheat \$3.82, Barley \$1.85. Loans are available for all eligible 2010 grain crops through March 31, 2011. Some crops such as Peas, Lentils, Corn, Mustard, Chickpeas, Safflower, and Sunflowers are available through May 31st. For more details please contact this office at 406-759-5128.



Liberty COUNTY FSA OFFICE
 PO Box 669
 Chester, Mt. 59522



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

Selected Interest Rates -February 2011	
Farm Operating - Direct	2.250%
Farm Ownership - Direct	4.750%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.500%
Conservation Loan	4.750%
Emergency - Actual Loss	3.750%
Farm Storage Facility - 7-year	%
Farm Storage Facility - 10-year	%
Farm Storage Facility - 12-year	%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	%
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%

Upcoming Important Dates to Remember:	
Oct. 1, 2010:	2011 DCP Sign-up Began & Continues
Oct. 1, 2010:	2011 ACRE Sign-up Began & Continues
Jan. 10, 2011:	SURE Program Signup for 2009 Crop Year Begins
March 14:	CRP General Signup Begins
March 15:	NAP Sales Closing Date for All Other Crops except Value-Loss and Honey
March 31:	Final Date to Request 2010 Marketing Assistance Loans/LDPs on Barley, Canola, Crambe, Flaxseed, Honey, Oats, Rapeseed, Wheat, and Sesame Seed
April 15:	CRP General Signup Ends
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
June 1:	2011 DCP & 2011 ACRE Programs Filing Deadline
July 15:	Final Date to report 2011 planted acres
July 29:	SURE Sign-up Deadline for 2009 Crop Year
Continues:	Contiguous Conservation Reserve Program

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