Flathead/Lincoln FSA
133 Interstate Lane
Kalispell, MT 59901-2877
(406) 752-4242 Ext. 2
Fax (406) 752-4879

County Committee Members

Doug Manning, Chair
Kit Stoken, Vice Chair
Dale Orem, Member
Hank Galpin, Member

FSA Office Personnel

John Nahrgang, CED
Carol Fladager, PT
Marlene Tidwell, PT

Next County Committee Meeting: **July 13, 2010 9:00 a.m.**

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: Fred Smith at (406) 676-2811 Ext. 2

Dates to Remember:

May 15 – Beginning date of Primary Nesting Season
June 15 – COC Nominations begin
July 15 – Acreage Report Deadline
July 15 – Final NAP production reports due for 2009
July 15 – Final date to file 2009 crop application for NAP Payment
July 15 – Deadline to report production for ACRE
August 1 – Farm Reconstitution Request Deadline
August 2 – Last Day for FSA to Accept COC Election Nominations
October 2010 – 2010 DCP and ACRE direct payments issued. 2009 additional ACRE payments, if applicable, will also be issued at that time.

FARM SERVICE AGENCY

Flathead/Lincoln FSA News
July 2010

Acreage Report Deadline July 15, 2010

Yearly acreage reports are required for producers to be eligible for specific programs. Acreage reports will be accepted from an owner, operator or tenant as well as those with power of attorney for these individuals. For 2010, the final crop reporting date is **July 15, 2010**. Late fees will not apply if acreage reports are filed by **July 15th** and all crop reporting requirements are met. Reports filed after the **July 15, 2010** date are subject to late-filed fees and a visual farm inspection and are subject to spot checks. If the reason for the late-filed acreage report is determined to be beyond the producer's control then the County Committee may waive the late-file fees. Failure to report accurately may result in loss of program and price support benefits.

CRP Managed Hay and Grazing starts July 16, 2010

The 2010 Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) managed haying and grazing start date is July 16, 2010, for all participants who have acres that are eligible to be hayed or grazed this year. Managed haying and grazing cannot begin until an application is completed at the local FSA County Office and written approval is received from the FSA County Committee or its designee.

CRP participants with conservation plans that included the managed haying and grazing provisions that applied after the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) Settlement Agreement in 2006, are limited to grazing 1 in 5 years and haying 1 in 10 years. Haying or grazing was not allowed until August 2. CRP participants with the NWF rules will have the opportunity to modify their contracts to switch to the old Montana Rules, which allow managed grazing 1 in 3 years and managed haying 1 in 5 years. Under the Montana rules, haying and grazing could begin July 16th. All CRP contract participants must sign the conservation plan modification and receive written approval from the FSA County Office before any haying or grazing can begin.

To determine if acres are eligible to be hayed or grazed the county office will determine when the acres were last hayed or grazed. Grazing can only occur 1 in 3 years on the same acres. Haying can only occur 1 in 5 years on the same acres. The 50% that has to be set aside for wildlife may be hayed the following year. The 2010 Managed Grazing Period is limited to 60 days - July 16th through September 13th. The Managed Haying Period is July 16th through September 30th. Participants who want to modify their conservation plans should contact their local county FSA office.

Transition Incentives

The Transition Incentives Program (TIP) encourages 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 opened 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 expiration of the CRP contract, provided the transition is not to a family member. For eligibility requirements producers should visit the FSA county office or www.fsa.usda.gov.

"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."

COC Nominations Close August 2

Nominations for candidates to run for the County Committee Election representing producers in a Local Administrative Area (LAA) close **August 2, 2010**. To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign form FSA-669A. The form and further information about FSA COC elections are available at your county office or online at: www.fsa.usda.gov ; select *News & Events* then *County Committee Elections*. Eligible voters may nominate as many candidates as they wish.

To be valid, the nomination form must be signed by the person being nominated indicating agreement to serve if elected, and returned to the FSA county office by the close of business on August 2, or postmarked by midnight August 2, 2010.

FSA county committee members serve three-year terms and make decisions on disaster and conservation programs, emergency programs, commodity price support loan programs and other important agricultural issues. Committees consist of three to five members elected by eligible local producers. Ballots will be mailed to producers beginning November 5, 2010. Completed ballots must be dropped off or received via mail at the county office by December 6, 2010.

LAA1, which is the southeast part of Flathead County, will be holding the election this year.

To Hold Office a Person Must:

Participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA; be eligible to vote in a county committee election and reside in the LAA in which the person is a candidate.

Montana Farm Service Agency - ONLINE

Information on programs administered by FSA in Montana and individual county office newsletters are available at:

www.fsa.usda.gov/mt.

Foreign Landowner Notification

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.

Foreign persons who 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 could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property.

FSA Cooperation with Risk Management Agency

The Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000 requires the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Risk Management Agency (RMA) to work together to improve program compliance and integrity of the Federal Crop Insurance Program. As a result of the passage of the 2000 Act, RMA and FSA are required to coordinate a plan to identify, address and reconcile discrepancies of all relevant producer-derived information, and to coordinate a monitoring program to include fact finding relative to allegations of program fraud, waste, and abuse. FSA will assist RMA and insurance providers in monitoring conditions throughout the growing season and conduct growing season inspections. All suspected cases of fraud, waste, and abuse concerning the Federal Crop Insurance Program will be referred to RMA. FSA will also assist RMA with auditing claims. Producers may also report suspected cases of fraud, waste, and abuse to their local FSA County Office, the RMA Office or OIG.

FWP Pilot Project seeks CRP Enrollments to improve Upland Game Bird Hunting

Some private landowners awarded a new 10-year Conservation Reserve Program contract with the federal Farm Service Agency can also enroll in a Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) pilot program that provides add-on rental payments. New and re-enrolled acres qualify, as do private and School Trust lands. Enrollment into this add-on rental payment program is based on competitive scoring. Eligible counties are: Cascade, Chouteau, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Glacier, McCone, Pondera, Richland, Roosevelt, Sheridan, Teton, Toole and Wibaux. FWP will contact applicants by mid-September to inform them of program acceptance. Applications deadline is **July 23, 2010**. Applications will be accepted through July 23 through mail to FWP – Wildlife Division; P.O. Box 200701; Helena, MT 59620. For more info, please go to FWP's website at fwp.mt.gov and Click "CRP Add-on Program" or contact Debbie Hohler at (406) 444-5674.

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 within 15 calendar days after the: disaster occurrence or date damage to the specific crop acreage is apparent to the producer for yield losses; or final planting date for prevented planting.

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, 2010 is the final date for NAP participants to submit crop year 2009 production evidence for crops that were covered in 2009. Failure to submit this documentation may lead to a substantially reduced APH.

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 necessary.

The reconstitution—or recon—is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. Remember, to be effective for the current year, recons must be requested by **August 2** for farms enrolled in specific programs.

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 to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract 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

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.

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USDA United States Department of Agriculture

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Selected Interest Rates for July 2010	
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%
Farm Operating - Direct	2.875%
Farm Ownership - Direct	4.875%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50%
Emergency	3.75%

Help Available to Stressed Farmers

Recently, the economy, inclement weather, and other factors have hurt some farming operations around the country. These events can push a producer to the emotional breaking point. Watching your livelihood being threatened is difficult for farmers and ranchers, especially for those whose income is solely dependent on agriculture.

The National Suicide Prevention Hotline is available to help. If you know a farmer or rancher who is under stress and is reluctant to ask for help, or if you just need to talk to someone, call 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Your call will be routed to the crisis center nearest you, where trained staffers are available 24/7. This nationwide service is free and confidential. Help is just a phone call away. For more information, go to http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/. This service is not affiliated with the US Department of Agriculture.