Hill County FSA News
August 2010

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Farm Service Agency
Hill County FSA Office
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County Committee Members
Clarence "Fritz" Keller
Richard Pollington
Dave Stevenson
Mary Ruth St. Pierre

Next County Committee Meeting: **August 5, 2010 at 8:00 am**

FSA Office Personnel
Liane Albus
Clint Greytak
Linell Pegar
Rosalie Sather
Lisa Toth
Barbara Brown
Mike Zook

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:
(406)357-2320
Dick Nicholson
Miranda Skoyen
Denise Reynolds

Dates to Remember:
Aug. 2 – Last Day for FSA to Accept COC Election Nominations
Aug. 9 – TAA deadline for Lamb Producers
Aug. 2- Aug. 27 – CRP Signup
Sept. 1 – ACRE Yield Form Deadline
Sept. 7 – ECP Deadline
Sept. 13 – Managed Grazing Deadline
Sept. 15 – Durum Wheat Quality Program Deadline
Sept. 30 – Managed Haying Deadline

Late Certifications Still Accepted

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. 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 started 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.

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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. 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.

Emergency Conservation Program

Hill County has been approved for ECP for flooding. Signup started on July 6th, and goes through September 7th, 2010.

Eligible practices include debris removal, reshaping/releveling of fields, reconstruction of fences and replacement of conservation practices.

Hill County has now received its allocation. It is a 75% cost share program for producers, and 90% for Limited Resource Producers. You must apply before starting the practice in order to be eligible.

FSA Cooperation with Risk Management Agency

Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Risk Management Agency (RMA) are required to work together to improve program compliance and integrity of the Federal Crop Insurance Program. They 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.

General CRP Signup – August 2nd through August 27th, 2010

The first general signup in four years has been announced. Some modifications to the program that have been indicated;

- Additional points will be awarded to those willing to establish pollinator habitat.
- Places a greater emphasis on very highly erodible soils.
- No longer receive points for declining cost-share.
- Modified points formula for bidding below the maximum payment rate.

Soil rental rates have changed, and are lower than in the past. You may indicate with staff what acres you want to bid or rebid, but no work can be done until the signup is taking place. Please call to schedule an appointment.

Filing a 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 was 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.

Durum Wheat Quality Program

USDA will begin accepting applications for the Durum Wheat Quality Program (DWQP). Under this program producers may be eligible to receive a 50 percent cost share for applying fungicides to the 2010 durum wheat crop to control Fusarium head blight, commonly known as wheat scab. The deadline to apply for the 2010 crop year is Sept. 15, 2010.

Assistance for Wool and Lamb Producers

The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for Farmers Program may be of interest to Montana wool and lamb producers. One petition was filed by wool producers from Montana. The other petition was filed by lamb producers from Utah, Idaho, and Wyoming.

The program provides technical assistance and cash benefits to eligible U.S. producers of raw agricultural commodities whose crops have been adversely affected by imports of like or directly competitive commodities.

Nothing more needs to be done by wool producers at this time. If lamb producers are interested in joining the petition, they must complete a form FAS-930 by **August 9, 2010.**

ACRE participants – you must have your yield forms signed by September 1, 2010. It was extended!

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.

Hill County FSA Office
206 25th Ave W Ste 2
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Weeds on CRP

Weed control on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage is required by your contract. During the past 4 years, Western Salsify has rapidly spread throughout the area. This weed has proven to be relatively aggressive, and in some cases has begun to out-compete the desirable grass and legume species in CRP fields. Western Salsify must be sprayed in the late spring of the year. The optimal dates for spraying will most likely fall between May 10th and June 15th, but can still be addressed. Waiting until the plant has flowered, or a seed-head has become visible make it more difficult. It is important that you inspect your CRP fields early in the season to determine the severity of your weed control problem. You are encouraged to speak to your local chemical representative now to begin discussions concerning the chemicals that will be used to control this weed on your CRP acreage. We understand the legume/forb component of your current CRP stand may be damaged or destroyed by the spraying measures that must be taken to control Western Salsify. If the legumes or forbs are destroyed by your weed control actions, your CRP stand will still be considered to be acceptable, as long as an adequate stand of grasses (or other desirable species) are present.