

**U.S. Department of Agriculture
Farm Service Agency**
Meagher County FSA Office
P.O. Box J 4147 Hwy 89
White Sulphur Springs, MT 59645
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County Committee Members

Bert Williams-Chairperson
Ellen Berg- Vice Chairperson
Scott Jackson- Member

*Next County Committee Meeting:
August 17th, 10:00 a.m. at the
Meagher County USDA Service
Center Conference Room*

FSA Office Personnel

Maggie Buckingham-PT
Woodie Jarvis- TO
Jeri Pavlovick-CED

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:
Yellowstone County FSA Office*

(406)657-6135

Mike Turley-FLM ext. 116
Karen Sims-FLPT ext. 100

Dates to Remember:

August 2 – Last Day for FSA to Accept
COC Election Nominations

August 2 - CRP Sign-Up Open

August 27 - Last Day of CRP Sign-Up

Sept. 1 - NAP Application Sales Deadline
for Value Loss Crops (2011 Crop Year)

Sept. 13 - Managed Grazing Period Ends

Sept. 15 - Durum Wheat Quality Program
Application Deadline

Sept. 30 - Managed Haying Period Ends

Sept. 30 - NAP Acreage Reporting
Deadline for Value Loss Crops

Sept. 30 - RMA deadline to purchase
Forage Production Policy (2011 Crop Year)

October 2010 – 2010 DCP and ACRE
direct payments issued. 2009 additional
ACRE payments, if applicable, will also be
issued at that time.



Meagher County FSA News

August 2010

CRP Sign-up Open August 2 to August 27

Competitive sign-up for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) opens on **August 2, 2010**. From that date through **August 27, 2010**, producers may offer eligible land for this program. USDA is authorized to maintain CRP enrollment up to 32 million acres.

CRP provides conservation practices that preserve the soil, clean water, and restore wildlife habitat. Producers enrolling in CRP plant long-term, resource-conserving covers in exchange for annual rental payments, cost-share and technical assistance. Participants voluntarily remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production by entering into long-term contracts for 10 to 15 years.

Land eligible for placement into CRP must be cropland that is planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity four of the previous six crop years from 2002 through 2007.

Producers eligible for CRP enrollment must have owned or operated the land for at least 12 months prior to the close of the CRP sign-up period (unless under certain exceptions).

Offers for CRP contracts are ranked according to the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI). FSA collects data for each of the EBI factors based on the relative environmental benefits for the land offered. Each eligible offer is ranked in comparisons to all other offers and selections made from that ranking. FSA uses the following EBI factors to assess the environmental benefits for the land offered:

- Wildlife habitat benefits resulting from covers on the acreage
- Water quality benefits from reduced erosions, runoff and leaching
- On-farm benefits from reduced erosion
- Benefits that will likely endure beyond the contract period
- Air quality benefits from reduced wind erosion
- Cost

All interested producers should contact the Meagher FSA office to learn more about this program and to schedule an appointment if interested in submitting an offer.

SURE Crop Disaster Program has Sept. 30 deadline

The deadline for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments program (SURE) for the 2008 crop year is Sept. 30, 2010. Sign-up for the crop disaster assistance program began on Jan. 4, 2010. There are no provisions for late-filed applications.

The SURE program is an important component of the disaster portion of the 2008 Farm Bill and will provide financial assistance to producers who have suffered crop losses due to natural disasters during the 2008 crop year. Producers who suffered crop production losses during the 2008 crop year are encouraged to visit their local FSA office about eligibility requirements and submit their applications by Sept. 30.

Marketing Assistance Loans & LDP's

Marketing assistance loans provide eligible producers with interim financing on their eligible production and facilitate the orderly distribution of loan eligible commodities throughout the year. Instead of selling the crop immediately at harvest, a nonrecourse loan allows a producer who grows an eligible crop to store the production, pledging the crop itself as collateral. The loan proceeds help an eligible producer to pay bills when they come due without having to sell the harvested crop at a time of year when prices tend to be the lowest.

Commodity loans can be repaid in three ways:

- At the loan rate plus the interest cost
- By forfeiting the pledged crop to the CCC at loan maturity
- At the alternative market loan repayment rate

Alternatively, loan deficiency payments (LDP's) may be received when market prices are lower than the commodity loan rates. The LDP option allows the producer to receive the benefits of the marketing loan program without having to take out and subsequently repay a commodity loan. The LDP rate is the amount by which the loan rate exceeds the posted county price. Please call the office for current LDP rates.

For loans, a producer must retain beneficial interest in the commodity from the time of planting through the date the loan is redeemed. For LDP's, a producer must retain beneficial interest in the commodity from the time of planting through the date the LDP is requested. **If you are interested in applying for an LDP, please make sure you have page 1 of form CCC-633EZ on file in the office prior to market delivery.**

Wetland Compliance

Producers renting or purchasing land that may have a converted wetland status need to check with the county office to learn if there are restrictions.

Farm Bill regulations provide that, unless exempt, persons are ineligible for benefits under certain programs administered by USDA if they:

- plant an agricultural commodity on wetland that was converted after December 23, 1985
- convert a wetland after November 28, 1990

FSA may not approve any loan or loan guarantee to drain, dredge, fill, level or otherwise manipulate a wetland, or to engage in any activity that results in impairing or reducing the flow, circulation or reach of water except in the case of activity related to the maintenance of previously converted wetlands.

The following provides permitted uses and restrictions within Wetland compliance provisions:

- wetlands can be farmed under natural conditions, but not converted
- wetlands converted before November 28, 1990, cannot be planted to an agricultural commodity and retain eligibility for benefits
- wetlands converted after Nov. 28, 1990, must either be restored to wetland status or mitigated to regain eligibility for program benefits.
- wetlands that can be farmed under natural conditions cannot be manipulated in any way, unless the Natural Resources Conservation Service determines the work would have a minimal effect on the wetland values
- wetlands converted before December 23, 1985, can be farmed and maintained

Additional information about wetlands is available at the USDA Service Center.

CRP Managed Haying and Grazing Began July 16

2010 Managed Grazing Period ends Sept. 13; 2010 Managed Haying ends Sept. 30

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.

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

New Meagher County NRCS District Conservationist

Hello Meagher County producers! My name is Shanna Huckins, and I'll be the District Conservationist in the White Sulphur Springs Natural Resources Conservation Service Office beginning August 16th. I thought I'd take the opportunity to say "hello" and touch on my background.

I was raised on a cow/calf and sheep operation in Southeast Montana along the Powder River, and was active in FFA, church, and many sports. My career with NRCS started after high school graduation, when I became a summer intern in the Broadus office. I attended college at Montana State University-Bozeman and earned a Bachelor's degree in Agriculture Education. During college summers, I interned with NRCS in Plentywood, Malta, and Fort Benton, and also had the opportunity to help out in the State Office in Bozeman during school. I spent one semester attending the University of Western Australia in Perth on exchange and experienced many beautiful cultures. In 2005 I graduated from MSU and was stationed in the Dillon NRCS Office as a Soil Conservationist. I enjoyed two years of working on rangeland and irrigation projects in Beaverhead County and was ready to gain knowledge in agronomy. I transferred to the Glasgow NRCS Office, where I have been joyously overwhelmed with producers willing to teach me about crop rotations and machinery.

I have been blessed to live most of my life in Montana, and even more blessed to have a part in helping Montana's farmers and ranchers put food on America's table and nurture Montana's legacy. Although I will miss the Hi-Line, I am so very eager to meet you folks and get started in White Sulphur Springs. You have a beautiful county with many treasured resources, and I pledge to give you my best to help conserve the soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources that make Meagher County such a special place. I look forward to making your acquaintance!



Shanna Huckins

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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.