



NEWSLETTER



Washington FSA

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Office Hours

Monday – Friday
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

Judy Olson, State Executive Director

State Committee

Lennie Davis, Chairperson
Larry DeHaan, Member
Steve Hair, Member
Jesus Limon, Member
Don Olmstead Jr., Member

Program Deadlines

May 20 – General CRP signup starts

May 31 – Application closing for commodity loan and/or LDP for 2012 crops of corn, dry peas, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, rice, safflower seed, chickpeas, soybeans and sunflower seed.

June 3 – ACRE signup ends; all contract signatures due

June 7, 2013 – SURE signup ends for 2011 crops

June 14 – General CRP signup ends

July 15 – Crop acreage reporting for 2013 spring seeded crops and CRP

Aug. 2 – DCP signup ends; all contract signatures due

NAP Application Closing Dates for 2014 Crop Year

May 1, 2013

Aug. 31, 2013

Sept. 30, 2013

Nov. 20, 2013

March 15, 2014

*Check with your county office or online for the crops associated with each closing date.

www.fsa.usda.gov/wa

NAP coverage should be purchased at least 30 days before the crop is planted, but no later than the application closing date.

NOTICE: This is a special print newsletter. FSA newsletters are primarily delivered electronically due to budgetary restrictions. If you wish to continue to receive news about FSA programs and benefits, please sign up for electronic newsletters. If you need assistance, contact your county office.

Electronic News Delivery

The USDA Farm Service Agency offices have moved to a paperless news distribution system.

FSA, like many other organizations, is trying to be more efficient. Moving to electronic notifications via email helps conserve resources and save taxpayer dollars. You can now subscribe to receive free email updates by going to www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe or contact the FSA office for assistance.

CRP Signup Starts Soon

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general signup starts May 20 and ends June 14, 2013. Producers that are accepted in the signup can receive cost-share assistance to plant long-term, resource-conserving covers and receive an annual rental payment for the length of the contract (10-15 years). Rental rates are based on the relative productivity of the soils within each county and the average dryland cash rent or cash rent equivalent. In general, no other income can be derived from the land while under contract.

To apply, submit a bid that outlines the conservation practices you will do and the annual payment rate you will accept. CRP signup is a competitive process in which the bids producing the highest environmental benefits per taxpayer dollars spent are accepted into the program.

Offers will be ranked using the Environment Benefits Index. Points will be awarded based on the environmental and habitat benefits of the proposed cover planted. More points are awarded for native vegetation. Existing CRP covers may need to be replanted to maximize the score. Extra points will be awarded for especially erosive land and bids that include pollinator habitat on 10% of the acreage.

Eligibility is based on several factors. Eligible land must have been planted to an annual crop for at least four years during 2002 to 2007. In addition, the land must be considered highly erodible, be in the state Conservation Priority Area, which encompasses portions of central Washington with soils susceptible to wind erosion, or be in an expiring CRP contract in 2013. Alfalfa or other multiyear grasses and legumes grown in a rotation not to exceed 12 years may be eligible for CRP Signup 45.

Producers with expiring contracts or with environmentally sensitive land are encouraged to evaluate their options under CRP.

Also, you may look into CRP's other enrollment opportunities offered on a continuous, non-competitive signup basis and that often provide additional financial assistance. Continuous sign-up dates will

be announced at a later date.

Agency fact sheets, including a complete list of eligibility criteria may be obtained at www.fsa.usda.gov or at your FSA county office.

SURE 2011 Crop Signup Ends

The deadline to submit applications for 2011 crop year Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE) is June 7, 2013. The application and all required documentation must be on file and signed by close of business.

The SURE program provides payments for crop losses due to eligible weather related disaster conditions affecting crops grown. Program eligibility is triggered when a disaster designation has been made for a county or when actual production is less than half of the normal established production. To be eligible, you must also have crop insurance or a Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program policy for all crops of economic significance. Socially disadvantaged, limited resource, or beginning farmers and ranchers are exempt from the insurance linkage requirement.

More information is available on the FSA website or from your county FSA office. Maps of disaster designations by county are on the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/wa.

FSA Offers Opportunity to be on Committee

Beginning June 17, the FSA is accepting nominations for county committees. The deadline to submit nominations to your county office is August 1, 2013.

The FSA county committee system provides is unique in the federal government. Farmers and ranchers elect their peers to help the agency administer programs and to provide an important information link between producers and FSA.

The three-to-five person committee is the place producers can appeal most agency determinations. The committee also makes decisions which can impact program payments.

You must participate or cooperate in at least one FSA program and be of legal voting age to serve on a committee. You must live in the local administrative area you will represent and must be eligible to vote in the county election.

Counties are broken up into local administrative areas (LAAs) for the purposes of representation and voting.

Members serve on staggered three-year terms so that one-third of the seats is up for reelection each year. Committee members are compensated for official duty hours.

FSA encourages all producers to consider being a candidate. Producers benefit from a diverse committee representing all of agriculture in your area.

2012 ACRE Production Reporting

If your farm participated in the 2012 ACRE program, to remain eligible for payment, either the operator, owner, or producer with a share of the crop must submit production reports for all 2012 crops. Production reports are due by July 15, 2013.

Production reports are submitted on form FSA-658 by commodity and are reported by farm and by tract to calculate the farm average yield. You may certify your production information so actual production sheets are not required. All production certifications are subject to spot check for a three year period.

Failure to timely complete production reports (FSA-658) will result in a request for refund of all Direct and ACRE program payments issued for the farm's 2012 ACRE program participation. Contact your local FSA office to set up an appointment or obtain the forms.

Acreage Certification

After spring planting, producers should certify their 2013 acreage. Filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs.

Failed acreage must be reported within 15 days of the disaster event and before disposition of the crop. Prevented planting must be reported no later than 15 days after the final planting date.

Acreage reports are required for many Farm Service Agency programs, including DCP and CRP. All crops not yet reported must be certified by the July 15 deadline.

Acreage reports on crops covered by NAP are due in the county office by the earlier of July 15, 2013 or 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest or grazing of the specific crop acreage being reported. Failure to report by the deadline can result in the loss of benefits or the assessment of fees.

New Microloan Program

FSA is offering more flexible access to credit through a new microloan program. The program is an attractive alternative for smaller farming operations.

Microloans can be used for all approved operating

expenses as authorized by the FSA Operating Loan Program, including but not limited to:

- initial start-up expenses;
- annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents;
- marketing and distribution expenses;
- purchase of livestock, equipment, and other materials essential to farm operations;
- farm improvements such as wells and coolers;
- hoop houses to extend the growing season.

The application process for microloans is simpler, requiring less paperwork. Requirements for managerial experience and loan security have been modified to accommodate smaller farm operations, beginning farmers and those with no farm management experience. Applicants will need to have some farm experience. However, FSA will consider an applicant's small business experience as well as any experience with a self-guided apprenticeship as a means to meet the farm management requirement.

Eligible applicants may obtain a microloan for up to \$35,000. The repayment term may vary and will not exceed seven years. Annual operating loans are repaid within 12 months or when the agricultural commodities produced are sold. Interest rates are based on the regular OL rates that are in effect at the time of the microloan approval or microloan closing, whichever is less. Currently the rate is 1.375%. Contact the county office for more information.

Reporting NAP Production

Producers who obtain Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage are required to annually report all production for NAP covered crops to remain in compliance with NAP program requirements. Production can be provided to your local county office verbally or actual production evidence can be submitted.

For the 2012 crop year, NAP covered crop acres and production must be entered on form CCC-452 and you must sign this form no later than close of business on Monday July 15, 2013.

Failure to timely report production will have a direct effect on future year approved yield calculations for your NAP covered crops.

Farm Bill Update

Because the current farm bill is an extension of the 2008 Farm Bill, most programs will expire September 30, 2013 unless new legislation authorizes the programs.