

October 2013



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## Washington State FSA Updates - Newsletter Change

Due to staffing and workload requirements, the Farm Service Agency is changing our newsletter delivery. Newsletters will be created at the state office and will be sent out every other month. If applicable, there will be two versions: one for the east side of the Cascades and one for the west side. Each will contain the same information, just with a different emphasis. You will not need to change your GovDelivery newsletter subscription.

**Your local office will remain the best contact for any questions** and a link to the county office locator is [here](#) and in several places in the newsletter. Local offices will also supplement these newsletters with additional informational bulletins.

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### Washington State FSA Office

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**State Executive Director:**  
Judy Olson

**Chief Admin. Officer:**  
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**Program Chief:**  
Rod Hamilton

### Acreage Reporting

In 2012, changes occurred to acreage reporting dates. These changes were the result of an initiative to bring acreage reporting dates for all USDA agencies together into a single common process. Many USDA programs require timely and accurate acreage reporting each crop year to maintain or receive benefits.

The first reporting dates for the 2014 crop year are fast approaching. Producers who have recently completed the planting of fall seeded crops have until December 15, 2013 to timely file your reports of acreage with FSA. Remember, to complete this process, you must also provide the date you completed planting on each field.

Perennial fruit/nut and forage producers also need to pay attention to the new reporting dates. Your final acreage reporting date is January 15, 2014. Previously only insured producers were required to report acreages prior to this date. Now, producers with Non-insured Crop Disaster

**Farm Loan Chief:**  
Mike Mykines

Assistance Program (NAP) covered crops are also included in this group.

**Next State Committee Meeting:** Oct. 9 - 10, 2013

Forage producers, who normally only graze your crops and do not mechanically harvest, must report your acreage prior to turning livestock out to graze. Program requirements include reporting acreage prior to the onset of harvest, which can occur early in the spring when the last thing on your mind may be filing an acreage report.

[Link to County Office Contact Information](#)

[Link to County Committee Listing and Schedules](#)

Please contact your county office to request an appointment to file your 2014 crop acreage reports as soon after final fall planting as possible. Remember many insurance and crop loss benefits are not available if you have not timely filed your annual planted crop report.

Contact the [county office](#) prior to the December 15 deadline to secure the first available appointment for reporting.

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## Program Payments

FSA will be issuing 2013 DCP, ACRE and CRP payments starting in early October. If your [county office](#) has indicated there are forms or signatures you need to submit in order to be paid for 2013, you should submit these materials immediately in order to receive a timely payment. Sequestration will apply to applicable program payments starting October 1, 2013. The percentage of payment reduction will be announced later.

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## Farm Bill Expiration

With expiration of the 2008 Farm Bill extension on September 30, most major FSA programs will end. This includes DCP, ACRE and new CRP or CREP enrollments. DCP, ACRE and CRP payments will still be issued for contracts in effect for 2013, but enrollment in any 2014 programs will not be available until a Farm Bill is passed.

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## Loan Funding Availability

Each year Congress appropriates money for FSA farm loans as part of the USDA budget. The funds are appropriated for the Government's fiscal year, which runs from October 1 until September 30 of the following year. A delay in passing a budget or the passage of a Continuing Resolution instead of a budget can affect the availability of FSA loan funds.

FSA still accepts, processes, and approves loan applications even if funds are not available. Approved loans are held until money becomes available. Loans are funded in date order, based on the date that the application was received. Submitting an application sets your place in the waiting line for funds, so it is to your advantage to apply for a loan even when there is no money available. Contact your [county office](#) for more information about FSA loans.

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## Timely Filing a NAP Notice of Loss

For crops covered by the Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), damage to, or loss of, covered crops must be reported to FSA timely. That means within 15 days after the adverse weather event, 15 days from when the loss becomes evident, or within 15 days after harvest of the crop - whichever comes first.

Timely filing a NAP notice of loss is required to ensure program eligibility requirements are met. NAP payments can be earned for covered crops that suffer greater than a 50% production loss due to eligible weather related damage. All eligibility requirements must be met including annual reporting of crop acreages, reporting actual production evidence on a yearly basis, and obtaining a loss adjustor appraisal before the damaged crop is

destroyed or left unharvested. Contact your local [county FSA office](#) for more information.

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## County Committee Elections - Voting Starts in November

Farmers and ranchers who want local input on federal farm programs have until December 2, 2013 to vote in the USDA Farm Service Agency county committee elections.

Committees make decisions which impact program payments and they are responsible for the hiring of the county executive directors. Also, you can appeal most agency determinations to your county committee.

To be eligible to vote, you must participate or cooperate in any Farm Service Agency program and be of legal voting age. You are considered eligible to vote under the cooperation criteria if you have farm records on file with the agency.

In early November, ballots will be sent to eligible voters with interests in the local administrative areas (LAAs) open for election. You may submit ballots in person to local USDA Service Centers or mail your ballot to your local FSA office. Ballots returned by mail must also be postmarked no later than December 2. If you did not receive a ballot or have questions about your county election and nominees, contact your [county FSA office](#).

Newly elected committee members begin their term January 1, 2014.

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## Assigning Program Payments to Third Parties

At a producer's request, FSA will issue all or a portion of your program payment to a third-party (assignee), such as a lender. This can save time and effort for you and any assignee with which you have an agreement. However, it is important that you and the third-party communicate concerning any changes in operation that may affect the payment amount each receives. Privacy laws prevent FSA from reporting any changes to the assignee.

FSA will make every attempt to pay the full amount designated by you on an assignment form. However, FSA will only pay the assignee to the extent you earn the payment. In situations where the assignee or the producer receives a portion of a payment intended to go to the other, you are responsible for working together to resolve any differences.

If you would like to sign up for Assignment of Payment or would like more information on assigning program payments, contact your [county office](#).

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## Office Fax Numbers Are Changing

All FSA offices are assigned new toll free fax numbers under a new Fax2Mail system. Fax2mail allows USDA employees to send and receive faxes via e-mail. This will reduce costs. You will still be able to send a fax to your county office as you did in the past. However, you will want to call your [county office](#) and ask for the new fax number before sending your documents.

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## Making the Most Effective Use of FSA Assistance

With fewer employees in FSA offices, FSA is looking at how to meet producers' needs while increasing efficiency. A few small steps on your part will help FSA staff serve you effectively.

- When changes occur in your operations, (whether it's for new land ownership, new entity operator/owner share member changes, leased land is dropped, etc.), have all the change documentation with you during a scheduled appointment. Examples include recorded deed copies, signed copies of leases and/or entity structure papers. If you're not sure what information is needed for any specific change, contact your county office prior to your appointment.
- Know your FSA farm number or numbers and/or CRP contract numbers. FSA farm numbers consist of one or more FSA tract numbers that are tied primarily to land ownership but also land descriptions or

identifiers. Many Columbia Basin irrigated tracts have unit and block descriptions while dryland farm tracts contain legal section/township/range. The FSA farm number (156EZ) report (listing all tracts, crop base acreage, and land descriptions) can be requested by producers that have a farm and/or tract operating and/or landowning interest. Being able to provide FSA staff with a farm and/or tract number will always speed up assistance. The same applies for CRP contract numbers.

- Have crop names, crop type/variety, intended use and planting dates by field (land location and FSA farm and tract number preferred) ready for your crop acreage reporting appointment.
- Provide your business email address. Email affords you and FSA a quick method of communicating. It's also cost effective, saving travel and postage expenses.
- Sign up for FSA's email GovDelivery newsletter service and stay on top of program enrollment and reporting deadlines. Key deadline reminders and new program announcements can be found in every issue. GovDelivery sign-up is easy and county staff can help you subscribe.
- Call before stopping by the office so FSA can ensure a qualified staff member is available to assist you.
- Plug important deadlines and office appointments into your phone calendars and home calendars. With reduced staffing, FSA's ability to provide personal reminders is diminished.

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## Important Dates

- **Oct. 14** – FSA offices closed for the Columbus Day holiday.
- **Nov. 4** - COC election ballots mailed to voters.
- **Nov. 11** – FSA offices closed for Veteran's Day.
- **Nov. 20** – NAP application closing date for perennial crops (asparagus, berries, grapes, honey, hops, tree fruits and nuts. Note: Some perennial crops (garlic; mint; perennial grazing, forage, mixed forage and forage seed crops; wheat) closed at the end of September.
- **Nov. 28** – FSA offices closed for Thanksgiving.
- **Dec. 2** - COC election ballots due to the county office.
- **Dec. 15** – Crop acreage reporting date for fall seeded 2014 crops.
- **Dec. 25** – FSA offices closed for Christmas.

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If you have questions about FSA activities, please view our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page or you may also [Search](#) our web site. These features are designed to assist you in obtaining the information you are seeking.

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