



NEWSLETTER



January, 2012 Edition

Adams County FSA
506 Weber Ave. Suite A
Ritzville WA 99169
(509) 659-1761 (office)
(509) 659-4722 (FAX)

Office Hours
Mon. – Fri. 8:00 a.m – 4:30 p.m.

County Committee
LeRoy Watson Jr.
Greg Galbreath
Matt Miller
Trish McRae

Office Staff
Chris Holt, Executive Director
Jullie Cain, Program Technician
Angela Melcher, Program Technician
Karin Neilsen, Program Technician
Elizabeth Sitton, Program Technician

Farm Loan Program Staff
Libby Anderson, Farm Loan Manager
Nancy Seger, Farm Loan Officer
Blanca Alvitres, Farm Loan Officer

Contact Farm Loan Staff at
(509) 754-2463

Next COC Meeting
February 23, 2012

Dates to Remember

- DCP/ACRE Signup Begins 1/23/2012
- CRP Seeding Deadline 2/15/2012

More Information may be found at
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa>.

Electronic e-Newsletters Are Here

Beginning with this newsletter, the information we provide to our customers about USDA programs is going electronic. As a part of the Farm Service Agency mandate to reduce federal spending, we have been instructed to discontinue the printing and mailing of paper newsletters from county offices.

Eliminating the print and mailing costs of a newsletter is a positive step for taxpayers, but it does leave us in a predicament at least initially in getting newsletters delivered to those persons who have not yet provided Farm Service Agency with a current e-mail address. We are planning on asking for this information from program participants during the signup process this spring, and appreciate any help you can also provide in helping us to spread the word to your landowners who may only infrequently contact our office and may not yet have provided e-mail contact information. Establishing your information does require each person requesting electronic mail to provide a current e-mail address, and complete a request to “decline” bulk paper mailings. Persons may also self-enroll in GovDelivery at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe>. Please share this information with your landowners during signup activities and ask them to provide this information to our office. Thank you in advance for helping assist us in “rebuilding” our mailing list.

DCP and ACRE Signup Announced

Signup to participate in the Direct Counter-Cyclical (DCP) Program and for the Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program will begin on January 23, 2012, and continue through June 1, 2012. Appointments may be scheduled by contacting our office. The notable changes for 2012 under these programs include a change in the percentage of base acres on which payment is calculated to 85% (up from 83.3%), and elimination of the advance payment option on direct payments which will now be issued in full during October 2012.

2012 is the final year for considering election of the multi-year ACRE program. ACRE requires a one-time election for the years 2009-12; ACRE farms are subject to a 20% reduction in direct payments and a 30% reduction in commodity loan rates as a condition of enrollment. In exchange for these reductions, ACRE payments are provided when *both* state level and farm level revenue for an ACRE crop falls below established thresholds. State revenue compares current year state yield and current marketing year national average price to a 5 year average state yield, and the prior two year’s national average market year price. Farm revenue is calculated utilizing the same price criteria, but involves using the farm’s current year yield, and the higher of a 5 year farm average yield or the 5 year average county expected yield for the crop.

The multiple year feature of ACRE created uncertainty for persons trying to predict future price and yield events over a four year period. However, with 2012 being the final year of ACRE under current legislation, producers not previously electing ACRE may wish to reanalyze the program using ACRE data which is available at www.fsa.usda.gov/dcp.

COC Election Results

Balloting was recently completed in the County Committee election in Local Administrative Area (LAA) 2. As a result, Matt Miller has been elected to serve a three year term on the committee, with Jani Melcher elected to serve as first alternate. Thank you to all who voted, and to Jani and Matt for their willingness to serve on the Committee. The committee holds regular meetings 8 times each year; the schedule for regular meetings is posted in the USDA Service Center and upcoming meeting dates are noted in the newsletter banner. Regular session meetings are open to the public.

SURE Signup Continues

Signup is underway for the Supplemental Revenue Assurance Program (SURE), and will continue through June 1, 2012. SURE is designed to assist producers who suffered weather related crop losses during the 2011 crop year. Eligibility is based on demonstrating losses of at least 10% for one or more crops of economic significance, and requires applicants to have carried multi-peril crop insurance and/or Noninsured Assistance Program (NAP) coverage on all crops of economic significance. Qualifying farms are eligible for assistance on 60% of the difference between calculated actual whole farm revenue in comparison to calculated expected whole farm revenue. For additional information on individual eligibility for SURE, please contact our office to schedule a review of your data.

Acreage Reporting Software Available

Acreage reports being accepted now through June 30, 2012 for persons participating in programs requiring reporting, including DCP/ACRE CRP, SURE, NAP, and commodity loans. Be prepared to report person(s) share of the production, type/variety and intended use of the crop, and crop planting dates. Program data is now shared between FSA and RMA, so it is critical that the data provided to FSA and to crop insurance agents match! Errors can lead to ineligibility for FSA programs, and/or lack of insurance coverage.

Transition Incentive Program Available for Expiring CRP Contract

In Adams County, 581 CRP contracts covering over 56,000 acres are due to expire as of September 30, 2012. To date, there has been no announcement by the Secretary of Agriculture authorizing a general CRP signup to reenroll this acreage. One potential answer for landowners and operators faced with the possibility of no general CRP signup is to consider the CRP-Transition Incentive Program (TIP).

TIP was authorized under the 2008 farm legislation to encourage the transfer of CRP lands from retiring landowners and operators, to beginning farmers and ranchers. The concept is fairly simple; in the final year of a CRP contract, a retiring landowner determines to transfer operation to a beginning farmer (someone who has been involved in the operation of a farm for 10 or less years) through either sale, or long term lease (minimum of 5 years). The beginning farmer agrees to farm the land upon the termination of the CRP contract using a sustainable conservation system developed through NRCS. Retiring landowners, and all persons on the existing CRP contract, then may earn two additional annual transitional payments, which are equal to the current CRP annual rental payment, and made on the same anniversary dates, while allowing the beginning farmer to begin cropping of the CRP acreage during the transitional period.

There are restrictions on eligibility for TIP transfer, including transfers between lineal relatives, and beginning farmers must document their sustainable conservation system by development of an approved conservation plan through the NRCS. Finally, requests for participating in the TIP program must be filed prior to completing an agreement for sale of the land, or completion of the long term lease of land, and all activities required for approval of TIP contract must be completed no later than the expiration date of the current CRP contract.

CRP Final Seeding Date

The end of the seeding period for CRP contracts requiring permanent cover establishment this year is February 15, 2012. Modification of the cutoff date for seeding may be considered, for example if conditions have been good for overwinter precipitation, but based on conditions this winter to date, it is unlikely that extension of the seeding date will be authorized. Therefore, contract holders should plan on completing the required activities in CRP Conservation Plan of Operations (CPO) as scheduled. Changes to planned activities require a revision to the CPO, with the concurrence of the FSA committee and NRCS. Failure to complete required seeding, or to obtain a revised plan in the event that seeding cannot be completed due to reasons beyond the participant's control, would be considered to be a violation of the CRP contract, subject to penalty, or contract termination depending upon the severity of the situation. If you have questions about the requirements of your CRP contract, please contact our office to review your plan ahead of the seeding deadline.