



NEWSLETTER



July 2012

Garfield County FSA

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Office Hours

Monday – Friday
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

Garfield County FSA Committee

Diane Koller – Chair
Max Scoggin – Vice Chair
Chris Wolf – Member

Asotin County FSA Committee

Bruce Petty – Chair
Susie Appleford – Vice Chair
Earl Fitzgerald – Member

Farm Program Staff

Jeremy Nelson, CED
Sherri Meacham, PT
Emily Ruchert, PT
Connie Forsmann, PT
Lorelei McNamee, PT

Next COC Meeting:

Garfield County – July 10, 2012
Asotin County – July 11, 2012



CRP SIGNUP 43 RESULTS ANNOUNCED

The results of General CRP Signup 43, which ran this spring, have been announced. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that 3.9 million acres were accepted during the signup. Nationwide, nearly 48,000 offers on more than 4.5 million acres were submitted. Garfield County had over 4,700 acres accepted and Asotin County had over 11,400 acres accepted. NRCS is currently working on completing the necessary field work for each of the accepted offers. Please contact our office if you have any questions.

MAINTENANCE OF EXISTING CRP ACREAGE

This office wishes to remind producers with existing CRP acreage that controlling weeds and stand maintenance is a requirement of remaining in compliance with the CRP contract. Every year, FSA & NRCS personnel from this office conduct field visits to verify stand density and species requirements are being met, as well as to ensure that weed control measures are being conducted on CRP acreage. Please remember the following items:

1. We are now past the primary nesting season in Garfield and Asotin counties, which is April 1 through July 1, so prior approval is no longer needed if you decide weed control measures, such as mowing or spraying, are necessary.
2. Mid-management activities are required on most CRP contracts. Please review your conservation plans to see what year these operations must be completed in. Cost-share is available for these operations. Failure of CRP stands due to neglect of the CRP participant can lead to sizeable payment reductions, and in extreme cases, contract termination.

This year's weather has been ideal for weed growth throughout the county. Please take a look at your general and continuous CRP contracts and ensure that weeds are being managed appropriately. If your contract is pulled for a spot check, and there are weeds present and no effort has been made to control them, you will be found in violation of your CRP contract.

UPDATES TO CRP CONTRACTS

Please be aware that if you gain an interest (inherit, purchase, etc.) in farmland which has an active CRP contract on it, you have a limited time to sign a revised contract showing the changes in shareholders. In fact, any changes to a CRP contract are required to be signed and submitted to the FSA within 60 days of those changes becoming apparent to the FSA. Changes may include but are not limited to: changes of owners and operators, revised acreage numbers, and revised share distribution. Additionally, new shareholders of a CRP contract may need to complete other

documentation to establish their eligibility for payment. If a change occurs in your farming operation that you think may affect your participation in any FSA program, please contact the county office to determine what steps will be needed to maintain eligibility.

KEEP FARM RECORDS UP TO DATE

Accurate farm records are essential for this office to be able to administer farm programs effectively. With this in mind, operators and owners of farms participating in federal programs are reminded to please keep this office updated on any farm record changes that take place during the crop year. Record changes would include becoming a new operator or owner of farm ground, obtaining a new bank account, making changes to your entity structure, or notifying this office of deceased individuals.

FARM CHANGES AND RECONSTITUTIONS

Any changes in your farm's physical makeup, such as adding or removing land, can impact your acreage base. Farm reconstitutions must be requested by **August 1** to be effective for the 2012 program year. Your farm must currently comply with program requirements as it is structured, including required signatures and acreage reporting.

2013 NAP SIGNUP DEADLINES

Producers are reminded that the deadline to purchase 2013 NAP (Non-insured Crop Assistance Program) coverage are as follows:

August 31, 2012 – This deadline applies to canola and rapeseed

September 30, 2012 - This deadline applies to forage seed crops, perennial grazing crops (pasture) perennial forage crops (hay), and wheat.

November 20, 2012 – This deadline applies to honey and tree fruit.

The application fee for NAP coverage is \$250 per crop up to \$750 per county. The maximum for multiple crops in more than one county is \$1875 per crop year. In return for purchasing the coverage, the crop is covered from catastrophic loss of production or prevented planting due to natural disaster conditions. NAP also is a requirement for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) program and other FSA disaster programs. Please contact our office if you have questions.

FSA SEEKS CANDIDATES FOR FSA COUNTY COMMITTEE

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting nominations for the Garfield and Asotin counties' committees **between June 15 and August 1, 2012**. Farmers and ranchers are elected by their peers to help the agency administer farm programs and provide an important information link between producers and the agency. The three person committee is the place producers can appeal most agency determinations. The committee also makes decisions which can impact program payments. Each Committee usually meets every other month.

The committee draws its members from local administrative areas (LAAs). Counties are broken up into administrative areas for the purposes of representation and voting. This year's election for Garfield County is for LAA #2. The LAA is the northeast area of Garfield County. Asotin County LAA #2 is also up for election. This is the Cloverland portion of the county extending south to the Oregon border. Candidates must live in the local administrative area they will represent and must be eligible to vote in the county election. Members serve on staggered three-year terms so that one of the seats is up for re-election each year. Committee members are compensated for official duty hours. To be eligible for involvement, producers must participate or cooperate in at least one FSA program and be of legal voting age. Nomination forms must be submitted to the local FSA office.

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We encourage all producers to consider being a candidate. Producers benefit from a diverse committee representing agriculture in our area. The FSA office can help you determine which administrative area you are located in if you are unsure. Information about the elections and nomination forms may be obtained from the FSA office or the FSA website -<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=newsroom&subject=landing&topic=cce>.

BANKING CHANGES? LET FSA KNOW

If you changed banks and did not notify FSA, your payment could be delayed. Because payments are electronically transferred into your bank account, changes to your account and routing numbers need to be shared with FSA immediately. Changes can include the type of account, bank mergers, new routing number or account number. Your county FSA office can help avoid these problems if you contact them in advance of any banking changes.

2012 COUNTY LOAN RATES

For those interested in taking out a marketing assistance loan for crop year 2012, these are the applicable loan rates for both Garfield and Asotin counties:

Hard Red Spring Wheat - \$3.27/bushel

Hard Red Winter Wheat - \$3.50/bushel

Soft White Winter Wheat - \$3.06/bushel

Barley - \$2.20/bushel or \$91.67/ton

Oats - \$1.37/bushel

Producers are reminded that the loan rate for farms signed up in the ACRE program have a 30% reduction to the loan rate. Please contact our office if you have any questions.

FSA SIGNATURE POLICY

Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office staff by either spouse. Some exceptions to this rule apply. Spouses may not sign for each other for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations, or other similar entities. Also, the 2012 AGI certification forms must be filled out and signed by the individual that the form is for. Spouses and Powers of Attorney can no longer complete these on behalf of someone else.

OVER THE COUNTER CHECK CONVERSION PROCESS

Over the Counter Channel (OTCnet)

FSA/CCC is moving toward OTCnet, an electronic method for processing customer check payments. When a check is submitted for payment either in person or through the mail, the check will be converted into an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). The funds will be debited from the producer's account, usually within 24 hours of receipt. Please see the U.S. Department of Treasury legal notices posted in the Service Center or visit the following U.S. Department of Treasury Internet site for detailed information.

<http://fms.treas.gov/otcnet/legal.html>

What is OTCnet?

OTCnet is a Web-based online application process for converting paper checks presented to FSA into electronic debits to the producer's bank account. It presents many benefits, such as reducing lost/misplaced checks and paper handling. This improves customer relations, speeds the check clearing process, and reduces the potential for human error.

How will my check be handled?

The check will be scanned into the system and voided. The customer will not receive the check back from FSA. FSA will hold checks for up to 14 calendar days to ensure that the item was successfully processed, and then FSA will shred the check.

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USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Click here for the full non-discrimination statement.

http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navtype=FT&navid=NON_DISCRIMINATION

How quickly will funds be transferred from my account?

The transfer of funds from your account could occur within 24 hours. Therefore, you should be sure that you have sufficient funds in your account to process the transaction. If you do **not** have sufficient funds, we may initiate the transaction again.

How will this transaction appear on my account statement?

The transfer of funds will be reflected on your account statement. The transaction may be recorded in a different place on your statement than where your checks normally appear, such as under “other withdrawals” or “other transactions.”

What are my rights if there is a problem with the transaction?

You have protections under Federal law for an unauthorized electronic fund transfer from your account. You should contact your financial institution immediately if you believe that the transaction reported on your account statement was not properly authorized or is otherwise incorrect.

NEW LANDOWNER PAYMENT PROGRAMS FOR HUNTING, FISHING ACCESS IN SOUTHEAST WASHINGTON

Landowners in Whitman, Columbia, Garfield, and Walla Walla counties can receive liability protection, enforcement patrol and payment for providing wildlife habitat and hunting or fishing access through two new programs from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

The **Southeast Washington Hunting Access and Habitat Initiative** requires public hunting access under “Hunting by Reservation Only,” “Register to Hunt,” or “Feel Free to Hunt” arrangements for a minimum of one year. Payments range from \$3 to \$10 per acre, depending on habitat and/or access provided. A “Pheasant Focus Area,” that includes all of Whitman County and much of the other three counties, is top priority. For more information in Whitman County, contact Joey McCanna at 509-648-3632; in Columbia and Walla Walla counties, contact Dawn Davis at 509-540-4413; and in Garfield County, contact Jason Earl at 509-758-5314. **Sign-up deadline is July 31, 2012.**

The **Feel Free to Fish** pilot program pays cooperators per foot of river fishing access on 34 miles of the Touchet River downstream of Dayton in Columbia County and 62 miles of the Walla Walla River downstream from the confluence of Mill Creek, west of Walla Walla. A minimum of 100 feet of river frontage on both sides of the river is required, so different landowners on both sides of the river must enroll. This pilot program may be expanded to other rivers if landowners are interested. For more information, contact Dawn Davis at 509-540-4413. **Contracts begin Sept. 1, 2012.**

Both WDFW programs are funded by the USDA Farm Service Agency Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive program.