



SUMMER 2010 BENTON COUNTY FSA NEWS

Benton County FSA

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Office Hours

Monday – Friday
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

County Committee

David Roseberry, Chair
Jeff Freepons, Vice-Chair
Carl Anderson, Member
Teresa Engbretson, Advisor

Office Staff

Dennis Simmelink, CED
dennis.simmelink@wa.usda.gov
Bonnie Anderson, PT
Teresa Johnson, PT
Hollie Tuttle, PT

Farm Loan Staff

Serving Benton and Franklin
Counties:
Libby Anderson, FLM
509-754-2463
Joyce Nevins-Ginsberg, FLO
Beth Farias, PT
509-545-8543

Next COC Meeting

September 15

COC meetings are normally held on Wednesday of the second full week of the month @ 9:00 (NO meetings are held during the month of July.)

Get Your Payments Timely & Accurately

Changes in your Bank Account or has your Bank merged or changed names? If so, don't forget to update your Direct Deposit Form(s) for timely payments. Please keep us informed of any changes to your address or operation.

FSA WEB Sites

National: www.fsa.usda.gov
State: www.fsa.usda.gov/wa
USDA: www.usda.gov

Reasonable Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing loss. If accommodations are required, please contact Dennis Simmelink at (509) 786-2313.



Conservation Reserve Program General Sign-up

The Secretary of Agriculture has announced there will be a general sign-up for producers interested in enrolling land into the Conservation Reserve Program. Dates for the sign-up have been set for August 2 through August 27, 2010. Offers selected for contract will be enrolled with an effective date of October 1, 2010.

To be an eligible offer, the land must meet one of the following eligibility requirements. Field(s) offered must either be determined to be highly erodible (HEL) with an erodibility index of 8 or greater; must lay within an area designated under State or National Conservation Priority Area (CPA) designation; or must be expiring CRP acreage as of September 30, 2010. Within Washington State, CPA designations have been made for certain wildlife areas, and for the state air quality area. ***The air quality CPA boundaries established for this sign-up are based on hydrologic unit (HUC) areas where PM-10 soils are predominant; this has resulted in a slightly different eligibility boundary from those used in prior signups.*** For those with questions about the location of their land in relation to the CPA, the Air Quality CPA map will be available for review at the FSA office prior to sign-up. Eligible land must have been planted to an annual crop or conserving use in at least four years between 2002 and 2007.

Offers will be ranked for acceptance through a nationwide process using an Environmental Benefit Index (EBI) scoring process. The EBI awards points for items including cover type, soil erodibility, water quality, and wildlife benefits associated with the offer. Points are also awarded for the cost of each offer. Once a national EBI cutoff score is established, those offers above the cutoff are offered contracts, up to the County maximum limit of 25% cropland. There will be approximately 21,754 acres of land eligible for acceptance into CRP in Benton County under this sign-up. Therefore, the EBI cutoff within the County potentially may be higher than the national EBI cutoff level. Specific details of the EBI scoring system will be available by contacting the County Office prior to sign-up.

SURE Sign-up Reminder

FSA is anticipating the sign-up period for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE) for crop losses in 2008 will close soon. Eligible producers should apply for benefits as soon as possible to ensure payment eligibility.

The SURE program provides benefits for farm losses accrued in 2008 through 2011 due to natural disasters. A farmer or rancher is eligible for the program when a disaster designation has been made for their county or when actual production is less than half of the normal established production. Commodities are eligible for payment when covered with crop insurance or a non-insured crop disaster assistance program policy.

A fact sheet with more detailed information and a potential payment calculator are available on the FSA website. It is expected that a 2009 SURE program sign-up will be announced in the near future. Please contact our office to if you wish to schedule an appointment for the 2008 program.

Maintaining Eligibility for Disaster Assistance Programs

Our office wishes to remind producers of the important link between the Risk Management Agency (RMA) Federal crop insurance and FSA's supplemental disaster assistance programs, including the new SURE program.

To maintain eligibility for most supplemental disaster programs, producers **MUST** obtain a policy or plan of insurance of at least the catastrophic level (CAT) of insurance for crop year 2011. The more crop insurance coverage a producer has, the more the SURE guarantee will be. For those crops that are non-insurable, coverage under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) must also be timely obtained.

Producers are encouraged to contact our office and visit your local crop insurance agent to fully understand what crop insurance programs are available in the county and to ensure they are obtaining adequate coverage for eligibility.

The Adjusted Gross Revenue-Pilot and Adjusted Gross Revenue-Lite programs do meet the linkage requirements for SURE. Also, if there is no crop insurance coverage in a county for a specific crop, and that crop is insurable in another county under the traditional Federal crop insurance program, a producer may seek coverage by asking an agent whether they would be eligible for crop insurance under a written agreement.

Producers with fall planted commodities need to be making important crop insurance decisions for the 2011 crop year. The following websites are available to provide you with additional information:

2011 Multi-Peril Crop Availability Listing;
http://www.rma.usda.gov/aboutrma/fields/wa_rso/
Listing of crop/livestock agents;
<http://www3.rma.usda.gov/tools/agents/companies/>

County Committee Election for LLA #1

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees is important to ALL farmers and ranchers, whether beginning or long-established with large or small operations. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

County committee members are a critical component of the operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers and ranchers who serve on county committees help with the decisions necessary to administer the programs in their counties. They work to make FSA agricultural programs serve the needs of local producers.

County committees provide local input on commodity price support loans and payments, conservation programs, incentive, indemnity and disaster payments for some commodities, emergency programs, and payment eligibility.

FSA county committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws. County committee members apply their judgment and knowledge to make local decisions.

This year, nominations are for a committee member to represent producers in Local Administrative Area (LAA) #1 which is located in the northern portion of the county and includes all land lying north of Interstate 82 and west of State Route 225 at the juncture of Benton City, and the portion of the county north of State Route 240. Jeff Freepons currently holds this position.

-Important Election Dates-

August 2, 2010:

Last day to file nomination forms at the local FSA Office.

November 5, 2010:

Ballots mailed to eligible voters.

December 6, 2010:

Last day to return voted ballots to the local FSA Office.

December 8, 2010:

Ballots are counted at local FSA Office.

January 1, 2011:

Elected committee members and alternates take office.

ACRE Payment Rates for Wheat and Barley Announced

The 2009 marketing year is completed and final prices and yields have been announced for use with the Average Crop Revenue (ACRE) program. The final Washington State yield for wheat was 54.9 bushels per acre compared to the 5 year state average of 61.0 bushels per acre; final Washington state barley yield was 64.0 bushels compared to a 61.0 bushel five year state average. 2009 market year price averages were established at \$4.87 per bushel for wheat and \$2.61 per acre for barley, compared with two year average prices of \$6.61 (wheat) and \$ 4.09 (barley). This means that the state revenue trigger was met for both barley and wheat in Washington State in 2009.

The second criteria for determining ACRE payment eligibility is to determine if farm level trigger is met by inserting individual farm yields and five year historic yields into the calculation, replacing state yields. If farm level trigger is also met for the farm, ACRE payments are due.

Based on the above averages, if farm trigger is also met, wheat ACRE payments will be calculated by taking \$91.00 per acre (for wheat) or \$56.14 per acre (for barley), times 83.3% of the farm planted acreage for each crop, not to exceed total farm base acres, times the factor determined by dividing historic farm yield by the state benchmark yield.

ACRE payments are issued in October, and are subject to separate payment limitation of \$65,000 per person, plus any payment limitation amount reduced from direct limitation due to ACRE enrollment.

Tree Assistance Program

The Tree Assistance Program (TAP) provides help to orchardists and nursery tree growers who produce trees, bushes and vines for commercial purposes, to replant or rehabilitate trees, bushes and vines damaged or destroyed by natural disasters. To be eligible for TAP, producers must have suffered more than a 15 percent death loss due to the natural disaster after adjustment for normal mortality. Producers must also have purchased a policy or plan of insurance under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program. Sign-up for losses experienced prior to May 7th, 2010 has passed. Sign-up for losses from weather disaster events from May 7, 2010 and forward is on-going, but should be filed at or near the time the disaster occurred or loss becomes apparent for the best opportunity of approval. Pre-plant and post-plant inspections are required. We strongly encourage producers to not take out and/or destroy damaged trees, bushes and/or vines before a field inspection is made.

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