



# NEWSLETTER



## February 2013

### Benton County FSA

Agricultural Service Center  
415 Wine Country Rd  
Prosser, WA 99350  
Phone: (509) 786-2313 Ext: 2  
Fax: (509) 786-1175

### Office Hours

Mon.-Fri. - 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

### County Committee

Jeff Freepons – Chair  
Carl Anderson – Vice Chair  
David Roseberry – Regular Member  
Sue Abken – COC Advisor  
Ernie Lara – COC Advisor

### Farm Program Staff

Dennis Simmelink, CED Ext: 102  
[dennis.simmelink@wa.usda.gov](mailto:dennis.simmelink@wa.usda.gov)  
Teresa Johnson, PT Ext: 107

### Farm Loan Staff

Pasco, WA (509) 545-5843  
Joyce Nevinsginsberg, SFLO ext.105  
Beth Farias, FLT ext. 108

### FSA Web sites:

State:  
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa>  
National:  
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov>

### Next COC Meeting

March 6, 2013 @ 9:00 AM

### Dates to Remember

DCP/ACRE signup  
February 19 – August 2  
CRP Signup  
May 20 – June 14

More Information may be found at

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa>.

### 2013 COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION RESULTS

Congratulations to Carl Anderson who was re-elected to represent farmers from LAA #3, the south eastern portion of the county. Carl is entering his 2<sup>nd</sup> term on the committee and will serve for the next 3 three years. Sue Abken was elected to her first term on the committee as an Alternate for this area.

During the COC Organizational Meeting held in January, Sue was nominated by the Committee to serve as a Woman Advisor to the Committee, along with Ernie Lara being re-nominated as the Hispanic Advisor. Both nominations have gone to the WA State FSA Committee and were approved during their February STC meeting. COC advisors are appointed for a one year term, and become effective March 1.

The COC structure for 2013 was also decided during the Organizational Meeting with Jeff Freepons being elected Chair, Carl Anderson, Vice Chair, and David Roseberry, Regular Member. A sincere 'thank you' to all these individuals willing to serve the producers of Benton County!

### DCP/ACRE SIGNUP

The 2008 Farm Bill was extended through September 30, 2013. Most major programs were extended including **DCP/ACRE, MILC, NAP, commodity loans and CRP**. **All producers will have the option to choose either DCP or ACRE for 2013.** Adjusted gross income (AGI) provisions will continue to apply.

**Signup for DCP/ACRE began on February 19, 2013. DCP signup will run through August 2, 2013, while the ACRE signup will only go until June 3, 2013.**

### CRP GENERAL SIGNUP 45 ANNOUNCED

**The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general signup starts May 20 and ends June 14, 2013.** There are 24,373.3 acres (155 contracts) expiring from CRP this year. Producers with expiring contracts or producers with environmentally sensitive land are encouraged to evaluate their options under CRP. 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 the FSA website [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov) or through the FSA County office.

### 2011 SUPPLEMENTAL REVENUE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM CONTINUES

Signup for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance (SURE) program opened October 22, 2012, and **will continue through June 7, 2013.** SURE covers weather related crop losses suffered during the 2011 crop year which ended September 30, 2011.

Eligible producers must either have suffered a minimum 10 percent production loss to one or more crops of economic significance, and be located within a county declared as a primary disaster county, or contiguous disaster county, as designated by the Secretary of Agriculture (*which includes Benton County*).

## **HISPANIC AND WOMEN FARMER AND RANCHER CLAIMS PERIOD – ENDS MARCH 25, 2013**

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack recently announced a claim process open to Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA between 1981 and 2000 due to denial of application for loan or loan servicing assistance. The claim period began September 24, 2012, and **will continue through March 25, 2013**. Information related to applying for consideration under the claim process may be obtained by calling 1-888-508-4429 or on the web at [www.farmerclaims.gov](http://www.farmerclaims.gov).

## **NEW MICROLOAN PROGRAM**

Starting in January, FSA will offer more flexible access to credit through the new Microloan program. The program is an attractive loan alternative for smaller farming operations like specialty crop producers and operators of community supported agriculture (CSA). Microloans can be used for all approved operating expenses as authorized by the FSA Operating Loan (OL) Program, including but not limited to seed costs, equipment purchases, livestock purchases, fertilizer costs, minor farm improvements, and marketing expenses.

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. Currently the rate is 1.25%. Contact the county office for more information.

## **IRS 1099 CHANGES**

Calendar year 2012 brought changes to the way FSA reports farm program payments to the producer and to the IRS. In past years, IRS Forms 1099-G would be issued to show all program payments received from the Farm Service Agency, regardless of the amount. For calendar year 2012, producers whose total reportable payments from FSA were less than \$600 will not receive IRS Form 1099-G. Also, producers who receive payments from more than one county will only receive one Form 1099-G if the total of all payments from all counties is \$600 or more. The same changes will apply to producers and vendors who normally receive IRS Form 1099-MISC from FSA.

## **BEGINNING AND LIMITED RESOURCE FARMERS**

FSA assists beginning farmers and members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training, and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's median size.

Additional program information, loan applications and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

## **FARMING OPERATION CHANGES**

Producers who have bought or sold land, or added or dropped rented land from their operation must report those changes to the FSA office as soon as possible. A copy of the deed or recorded land contract for purchased property is needed to maintain accurate records with FSA. Failure to report changes can lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties. While making record updates, be sure to update signature authorizations. Making record changes now will save time in the spring.

## **BANK ACCOUNT CHANGES**

Current policy mandates that FSA payments be electronically transferred into a bank account. In order for timely payments to be made, producers need to notify the FSA county office when an account has been changed or if another financial institution purchases the bank where payments are sent. Payments can be delayed if the FSA office is not aware of updates to bank accounts and bank routing numbers.

## **FOREIGN BUYERS NOTIFICATION**

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their purchases or sales of property to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA.

All individuals who are not U.S. citizens, and have purchased or sold agricultural land in the country are required to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form FSA-153 could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, realtors, attorneys, and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

## **MARKETING ASSISTANCE LOANS**

Short-term financing is available through FSA's low interest commodity loans for eligible harvested production. A nine-month Marketing Assistance Loan provides financing that allows producers to store production for later marketing at a potentially better price. The crop may be stored on a farm or in a warehouse.

Loans are available for producers who share in the risk of producing the eligible commodity and maintain beneficial interest in the crop through the duration of the loan. Beneficial interest means retaining the ability to make decisions about the commodity, responsibility for loss because of damage to the commodity, and title to the commodity. Once beneficial interest in a commodity is lost, it is ineligible for a loan, even if you regain beneficial interest.

The deadline to request a grain loan is March 31, 2013, for wheat and barley and May 31, 2013, for corn, soybeans and sorghum.

## **NON-INSURED CROP DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (NAP) CLOSING DATE**

**March 15, 2013** - NAP Application Closing Date for spring seeded 2013 planted crops.

## **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.

There are exceptions to the rule. Spouses may not sign on behalf of each other for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities.

Individual signatures are also required on certain Farm Loan Program and Farm Storage Facility Loan documents. For more clarification on spousal signature authority, contact your local FSA office.

## **POWER OF ATTORNEY**

For those who find it difficult to visit the county office because of work schedules, distance, health, etc., FSA has a power of attorney form available that allows producers to designate another person to conduct business at the office. If interested, contact our office or any Farm Service Agency office for more information.

## **USDA EAUTHENTICATION FOR ONLINE PRODUCER WEB SERVICES**

USDA eAuthentication provides:

**Convenience.**

The Internet allows you to access information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. For example, you can fill out and submit electronic forms (eForms) any time of day or night from anywhere you have Internet access. You can also fill out and submit applications for online services.

**Faster Processing.**

This new service delivery option allows you to complete and file your own forms or applications online, because your signature is already electronically on file.

**Identity Security.**

Information submitted to the Federal Government remains safe and secure because every customer has a unique User ID and password.

For more information about accounts, please visit the <http://www.dev.eauth.egov.usda.gov/eauthWhatIsAccount.html> page.