



NEWSLETTER



February 2012

Lower Columbia Area Farm Service Agency Clark – Cowlitz – Skamania – Wahkiakum Counties

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Office Hours

Mon. – Fri. 8:00 a.m – 4:30 p.m.

County Committee

Ken Bajema LAA3, Chair
Gary Boldt LAA2, Vice Chair
Joe Shulke, LAA5, Member
Erin Thoeny, LAA1, Member
Gordon Calvert, LAA4, Member
April Jones, 1st Alternate LAA1
Raymond Table, 2nd Alternate
LAA1

Office Staff

Taylor B. Murray, CED
Wes Taylor, PT

Next COC Meeting

Wednesday, March 21, 2012
at 10:00 am.

Dates to Remember

Direct and Counter-Cyclical
Program Sign up:
January 23, 2012 to June 1, 2012
Acreage Reporting:
Deadline – June 30, 2012
NAP signup for Spring Planted
Crops:
March 15, 2012
SURE Signup Ends:
June 1, 2012

FSA County Committee Election

Congratulations to Gordon Calvert who was re-elected to represent farmers and ranchers in LAA4, Wahkiakum County. Gordon has previously served one three-year term on the Committee and we are happy to have him back for another term! Congratulations to Erin Thoeny who was elected to serve farmers and ranchers in LAA1, Clark County west of I-5 including Woodland Bottoms in Cowlitz County. We are looking forward to having Erin, with her knowledge and experience in agriculture as a Committee member for the Lower Columbia Area. Although we are excited to have Erin, we are sad to say goodbye to her father, George Thoeny, Sr., who has been a dedicated member of the Lower Columbia area committee and has served the maximum of three terms as both a Committee member and Committee Chairman over the course of the last nine years. We will miss George's insight and his overall presence in our Committee meetings. We also bid farewell to Committee Advisor Carol Hoffman who has served as an advisor to the Committee, representing the interests of female farmers and ranchers in the Lower Columbia Area. Thank you to Carol for four years of service to the farmers and ranchers of the Lower Columbia Area. Finally, April Jones was elected as 1st Alternate to LAA1 and Raymond Table was elected as 2nd Alternate to LAA 1. April is a producer operating in Ridgefield, WA who grows organic produce, marketed to both restaurants and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) subscribers, as well as raises Heritage Hogs. Ray has been an

alternate to LAA1 for three years and has attended every meeting during his time with the Committee. Ray also resides in the Ridgefield area and raises oats and wheat on his property.

Many thanks go out to the nominees and to those elected members who represent the interests of all farmers and ranchers in the Lower Columbia Area. Thank you to all that took the time to vote. Your involvement in the annual election process helps to ensure that the local agricultural community's needs are met, through electing local producers who can adequately represent the agricultural interests of producers within the Lower Columbia area.

Newsletters

You may have noticed that we have not sent a newsletter in several months. Funding for newsletters was greatly reduced during fiscal year 2011. Because of the reduction in the postage budget for fiscal year 2012, the national FSA office has determined that all future newsletters will be sent by email, and posted on the internet. All producers are asked to furnish email addresses to our office as soon as possible so that notifications of new programs and signup deadlines can continue. Those without email capability or internet access are asked to contact the office so alternate arrangements can be made to provide program information.

Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP)

Signup for the DCP program began January 23, 2012 and ends June 1, 2012. Contracts must be prepared annually for this program that provides

payments based on historical grain plantings. The program remains the same as last year, except that advance payments will not be offered, and payments will be earned on 85 percent of your grain base, instead of the 83.3 percent figure used in previous years. All payments will be made in October 2012. Producers that apply for this program must file acreage reports by June 30, 2012. You must sign your contract and report your acreage in order to earn payment.

Signature Authority for Spouses

A husband and wife can sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) programs in which either has an interest, unless written notification denying a spouse authority has been provided to the county office. There are limited exceptions to the spousal signature provisions for specific programs and for farm loans.

New Adjusted Gross Income Forms

FSA and NRCS program participants, including all members of participating entities, must meet certain Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) requirements to qualify for benefits. Starting with the 2012 crop year, a new AGI form has been developed that both outlines average AGI provisions and includes "Consent to Disclosure of Tax Information". The advantage to you is that you will no longer be responsible for mailing the "Consent . . ." form to the IRS. Forms will be completed and signed by producers and then returned to the area Office who will then send them directly to the IRS.

Tax Reporting – Check Your Statement

During the last week of January, producers who received payments from FSA in 2011 should have received a CCC-1099-G from the Kansas City office. A CCC-1099-G is a report for the Internal Revenue Service about FSA payments made to you during the previous calendar year. The CCC-1099-G is designed to help participating producers report taxable income. It is not intended to replace the program participant's

responsibilities to report earned income to the IRS.

If you received a CCC-1099-G, we recommend that you check the amounts shown with those in your records to see that the amounts are correct. Refunds will no longer be reported on the 1099-G, but will be available online from the FSA Financial Inquiries (FSA-FI) web-based database. Program participants with eAuthentication user ID's and passwords can access their refund information at FSA-FI and select "Inquiry Type 1099-/Refund Reports". Refund amounts are displayed on the Producer's Year-to-Date Activity web page.

If you have a question concerning the 1099-G refund information, you may contact your local FSA office for assistance locating the correct payment data. If you choose to visit the office, bring your CCC-1099-G with you.

2012 Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

FSA's NAP coverage insures producers against catastrophic crop losses of more than 50 percent due to adverse weather events. Earned payments are paid at 55 percent of the average market price for each crop, and are based on a comparison between your actual yield and your approved yield. A nonrefundable administrative fee for NAP is \$250.00 per crop, up to a maximum of \$750 for all crops in the county. For multi-county producers, coverage is a maximum of \$1,875 for all crops grown in all counties. Coverage begins 30 days after the application is filed or after the crop is planted, whichever is later. NAP is available only for crops not covered by Federal Crop insurance policies provided by private insurance agents. Please note: March 15 is the 2012 sales closing date for spring planted crops.

Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE)

SURE sign up for 2010 losses has started and will run through June 1, 2012. The SURE program provides

benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disasters that occurred in crop year 2010. SURE is available to eligible producers with qualifying losses on farms with at least a 10 percent revenue loss on any single crop in counties affected by a Secretarial disaster declaration. Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, and Wahkiakum Counties are all eligible. SURE is also available to any farm which had a 50 percent or more production loss due to disaster-related conditions for the 2010 crop year.

FSA Loan Funds

FSA provides low interest, long-term loans to producers who have difficulty obtaining commercial credit. Direct Farm Ownership Loans may be used to purchase land, construct buildings or other improvements and apply soil and water conservation practices. FSA also has a Beginning Farmer Down Payment program to help purchase a farm or ranch.

Producers may use Direct Operating Loans to purchase livestock, poultry, equipment, feed, seed, farm chemicals, and supplies; to apply soil and water conservation practices, and to refinance indebtedness with certain limitations. When a county or contiguous county receives a disaster designation, FSA makes Direct Emergency Loans available. These loans may be used to restore or replace essential property, pay all or part of production costs associated with the disaster year, pay essential family living expenses, reorganize the farming operation or refinance indebtedness with certain limitations.

FSA also makes available Guaranteed Loans through commercial lenders. Guaranteed Farm Ownership and Guaranteed Operating loans can be used for the same purposes as the corresponding Direct Loans but they may also be used to refinance debt. For more information about FSA loan programs, contact the Lower Columbia Area Office at (360) 883-1987 ext. 2.