

July 2013



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Lower Columbia Area News FSA Seeks Nominees for Skamania County for the Lower Columbia Area FSA Committee

The Farm Service Agency is looking for candidates for the upcoming grower-elected county committee election. FSA is accepting nominations through August 1, 2013.

FSA county committees make decisions which impact program payments. They bring local knowledge of farming practices, prices and conditions to program implementation. Also, producers can appeal most agency determinations to the local county committee.

FSA encourages all interested agricultural producers, including women and minority growers, to seek nomination. Eligible candidates must participate or cooperate in any Farm Service Agency program and be of legal voting age. Even if you are not currently participating in FSA programs, you may be considered eligible under the cooperation criteria if you have farm records on file with FSA.

The Lower Columbia Area Committee draws its members from five local administrative areas located within Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania and Wahkiakum Counties. Nominated by local farmers and ranchers, 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-third of the seats are up for re-election each year.

This year's election takes place in LAA #3, which encompasses all of Skamania County. A map of FSA county committee election areas can be found on the agency's website <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa>.

Elected county committee members receive an hourly wage for their attendance and representation at county committee meetings.

Elections will take place in the fall and newly elected committee members begin their terms January 1, 2014. FSA will mail ballots to all eligible voters. Anyone not receiving a ballot by Nov. 4 can contact the office to request one.

Additional information and nomination forms may be requested from the FSA office. Nomination forms may also be obtained online at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa>.

**Lower Columbia Area
FSA Office**

Change of Address or Ownership

Please notify your local FSA office of all deaths, land ownership and address

11104 NE 149th street, C-500
Brush Prairie, WA 98606

Phone: 360-883-1987, ext. 2
Fax: 360-885-2284

County Executive Director:
Taylor Murray

Program Technicians:
Wes Taylor

Senior Farm Loan Officer:
Jeff Peterson
Phone: 360-748-0084, ext. 2

**NEXT Lower Columbia
Area Committee Meeting:**
July 25, 2013

IMPORTANT DATES:

**Nominations for Skamania
County Committee position
due:**
August 1, 2013

DCP/ACRE signup deadline:
August 2, 2013

changes as soon as possible so your farm records can be updated timely.

Updating records in a timely manner can help ensure all required participants appear on documents requiring signatures and prevent payment delays.

A copy of the applicable recorded deed should be provided to complete the land ownership changes.

Farm Storage Facility Loans

The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFLP) allows producers of eligible commodities to obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities.

The new maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL is \$500,000. Participants are now required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with CCC providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent drying and handling equipment. New loan terms of seven, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan. Interest rates for each term rate may be different and are based on the rate which CCC borrows from the U.S. Treasury Department.

Funding is available in the form of a partial disbursement and the remaining final disbursement. The partial disbursement will be available after a portion of the construction has been completed. The final fund disbursement will be made when all construction is completed. The maximum amount of the partial disbursement will be 50 percent of the projected and approved total loan amount.

Applications for FSFL must be submitted to the FSA county office that maintains the farm's records. An FSFL must be approved before any site preparation or construction begins.

For more information about FSFL please visit your FSA county office or www.fsa.usda.gov.

How FSA Funds Loans

Each year Congress appropriates money for FSA farm loans as part of the USDA budget. The funds are appropriated for the fiscal year beginning October 1 until September 30 of the following year. Each state is allocated a portion of the funds. When funds run low, the national office may pool money from the states and redistribute it based on need. If FSA runs out of loan funds before the end of the fiscal year, Congress may pass a supplemental appropriations bill to make additional money available. If Congress does not do so, loan applications wait until the next fiscal year to be funded.

FSA reserves loan money for two specific categories: under-represented groups and beginning farmers. By law, FSA sets aside a portion of funds for socially disadvantaged applicants. Applicants may include women, African Americans, Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asians and Pacific Islanders.

The law also requires FSA to reserve loan funds for use by beginning farmers. The funds remain targeted in the guaranteed programs until April 1 of each year and until September 1 of each year in the direct programs.

Loans are funded in date order, based on the date that applications are received. Submitting an application sets your place in the waiting lines for funds, so it is advantageous to apply early in the fiscal

year. FSA still accepts, processes and approves loan applications even after funds are exhausted. Approved applications are held until money becomes available or the applicant expresses a desire to withdraw the application.

Emergency loans are funded on a first-come, first-served basis when a natural disaster is declared. Funds are kept at the national office. For more information about FSA loans, contact Jeff Peterson, Senior Farm Loan Officer at 360-748-0084, ext. 2.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a voluntary program for agricultural landowners to install riparian buffers or hedgerows on salmon bearing streams. Grass filter strips and wetland enhancement practices are also available for waterways that drain into these streams.

Through a unique state and federal partnership, producers can receive annual rental payments equal to 150%-200% of normal CRP rates. Participants can also earn one-time \$100/acre signing incentives and cost-share assistance that usually covers 100% of installation costs. Maintenance payments are also available for the first few years of the contract.

CREP is intended to assist agricultural landowners in dealing with the presence of salmon in the streams on their property. Contact your local FSA office if you have any questions.

DCP/ACRE Sign-Up Continues

The sign-up period for DCP and ACRE are still open. Producers must sign up for DCP before the Aug. 2, 2013, deadline. Producers signing up for ACRE, have until June 3, 2013.

The 2013 DCP and ACRE program provisions are unchanged from 2012, except that all eligible participants in 2013 may choose to enroll in either DCP or ACRE for the 2013 crop year. This means that eligible producers who were enrolled in ACRE in 2012 may elect to enroll in DCP in 2013 or may re-enroll in ACRE in 2013. Likewise producers who were enrolled in DCP may opt for ACRE enrollment.

[Read more about DCP and ACRE](#) or contact the FSA county office for more information, or an appointment to enroll.

Spousal Signatures

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, where spouses may not sign on behalf of each other for interests in partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities.

Individual signatures are also required on certain Farm Loan Program and Farm Storage Facility Loan documents.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC

20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).