



March 16, 2009

## Columbia/Walla Walla County News

### DCP Signup Continues

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#### Office Hours

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#### Farm Loan Staff

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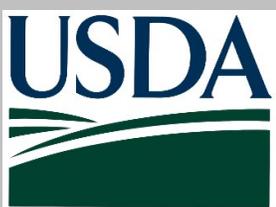
#### Dates to Remember:

**March 17<sup>th</sup>: St. Patrick's Day**

**May 25<sup>th</sup>: Memorial Day**  
Office Closed

**June 1: Deadline DCP signup**

**June 30: Deadline Acreage**  
Reports



Signup for the 2009 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment (DCP) Program continues until June 1, 2009. The June 1, 2009 deadline is mandatory for all participants. FSA will not accept any late-filed applications.

FSA computes DCP Program payments using base acres and payment yields established for each farm. Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. For 2009, you may request to receive advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment for each commodity associated with the farm. FSA will issue advance direct payments later this month. Counter-cyclical payment rates vary depending on market prices and are issued only when the effective price for a commodity is statutorily set below its target price.

The electronic DCP (or eDCP) service will save you time, reduce paperwork and speed up contract processing at FSA offices. It is available to anyone eligible to participate in the DCP Program. To access this on-line service, you must have an active USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account, which requires filling out an online registration form at <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov> followed by a visit to the local USDA Service Center for identity verification.

### Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP)

The deadline to signup for Noninsured Crop Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for spring planted crops, not insurable through your crop insurance agent, or summer planted buckwheat is **March 16, 2009**. Producers are reminded about the need for insurance coverage on crops in order to remain eligible for the agency's Disaster Assistance Programs such as SURE, LFP, TAP, and ELAP. Producers must purchase at least catastrophic (CAT) level of insurance for all insurable crops.

NAP is a federally funded program that provides coverage to producers for non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory or prevented planting occurs due to natural disasters. Crops eligible for NAP coverage are those for which crop insurance is not available, including fruits and vegetables, aquaculture, pecans, turf grass and forage crops just to name a few.

Producers must apply for coverage before a disaster strikes. NAP applications for coverage must be filed using Form CCC-471 and pay the applicable service fees by the closing date. Application closing dates vary by crop. Columbia or Walla Walla County producers can contact the FSA Office for specific crop application sales closing dates at: 509-382-2421 (Columbia County) or 509-522-6347 (Walla Walla County).

More information about NAP may be found on the FSA web site located at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>

### Payment Limitation Comment Period Extended

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has announced that the comment period for the regulation defining actively engaged participation in a farming operation has been extended for an additional 60 days, FSA is seeking a diverse range of comments from different areas of the United States and farming communities.

With this extension, the public may continue to submit comments until April 6, 2009. The extension document is available at:

<http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/ContentViewer?objectId=0900006480847a79&disposition=attachment&contentType=html>

The regulation, published Dec. 29, 2008, invited comments on the interim rule for implementation of key eligibility requirements for many FSA and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs. The regulations were revised as mandated by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) to make changes in payment eligibility, payment attribution, maximum income limits and maximum dollar benefit amounts for participants in CCC-funded programs. In addition, certain provisions were incorporated that are discretionary.

The actively engaged provision requires that individuals and entities must be "actively engaged in farming" with respect to a farming operation in order to be eligible for specified payments and benefits. To be "actively engaged in farming," the individual or entity must make significant contributions to the farming operation of (1) capital, equipment, land, or a combination; and (2) personal labor or active personal management, or a combination.

Under rules in effect since 1988, not every member of an entity is required to contribute active personal labor or management. The interim rule requires each partner, stockholder, or member with an ownership interest to make a contribution of active personal labor or active personal management. The contribution must be regular and significant, and documented as well as separate and distinct from any other member's contribution. The rule limits the ability of passive stockholders to continue to realize benefits from the entity.

The substantive rule changes make the requirement for adding new persons to a farming operation more restrictive. The addition of a person to an existing farming operation can be met through an increase of 20 percent of base acres to the operation; previously the requirement was an increase of 20 percent in cropland.

## **CREP & Continuous CRP Available**

At this time USDA has no general signups scheduled for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) in 2009. However, environmentally sensitive acreage qualifying for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), and Continuous CRP will still be eligible for enrollment. These targeted programs remain funded, and continue to provide a heightened environmental benefit on select areas.

## **Sodbuster, Swampbuster**

Most Farm Service Agency programs require compliance with sodbuster and swampbuster provisions. These provisions require producers to follow an approved conservation system on all highly erodible land planted to an annual crop as determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Be sure to have determinations made on any new land you plan to plant to annual crops. If you plan to plant a different crop on your current cropland, check with NRCS to assure the new crop will qualify under your conservation system. Swampbuster provisions state that converting a wetland to make possible the planting of a crop will result in the loss of all USDA benefits. To avoid this possibility it is strongly recommended that producers check with NRCS before starting to work in the fields.

## **Stimulus Funding for FLP Loans**

As part of the recently approved economic stimulus package, FSA's Farm Loan Programs (FLP) is scheduled to receive an extra \$173 million in funding for the direct operating loan (OL) program. Many states have a current backlog of approved OL loans waiting for funding. As of February 23, the backlog stood at 1,039 loans valued at more than \$72 million. Producers' financial needs have increased significantly with the elevated costs of production inputs and the downturn in the agricultural economy. This growing need, coupled with FLP's successful marketing efforts, has generated increased demand for FSA OL loans as well as farm ownership loans.

## **WALLA WALLA AG SERVICE CENTER HAS A NEW HOME**

The Walla Walla County Ag Service Center, housing the Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources and Conservation Services (NRCS) and the Walla Walla County Conservation District has moved to our new building located at **325 North 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Walla Walla**. Although some outside work is still under construction, we are open for business. Due to weather conditions, the driveway and parking lot are not yet paved however, don't let that stop you. We are up and running and taking program signup. An open house will be scheduled soon, so stay tuned.

## **THINK SPRING !**

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