



NEWSLETTER



Grant County FSA

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Office Hours

Monday – Friday
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

County Committee

Richard Reffett – Chair
Mike Edwards – Vice Chair
John Morris Jr. – Member
Gwinda Lutz – Advisor

Farm Program Staff

Greg Anderson, CED ext.1101
Marilyn Littleton, PT ext.1100
Katie Markham, PT ext. 1104
Roxanne Neilan, PT ext. 1103

Farm Loan Staff

Libby Anderson, FLM ext.1105
Nancy Seger, FLO ext. 1106
Paul Daling, FLT ext. 1107

Next COC Meeting

April 20, 2011 - 8:30 AM

FSA Web sites:

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

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

ATTENTION PLEASE!!

PLEASE KEEP THIS OFFICE UPDATED ON ANY RECORD CHANGES SUCH AS NEW LAND BEING PURCHASED OR FARMED, SELLING OF LAND, NEW OPERATORS OR OWNERS ON FARMS, DECEASED INDIVIDUALS, OR ANY CHANGES MADE TO YOUR ENTITIES.

CHANGES TO BANK ACCOUNTS ALSO NEED TO BE UPDATED AT THIS OFFICE. THANKS FOR YOUR COOPERATION!!!



APRIL-MAY 2011 EDITION

IRRIGATED PRODUCERS NEED TO ENROLL INTO 2011 DCP/ACRE

Appointments are now being accepted for producers wishing to enroll into the 2011 Direct & Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP), or the Average Crop Revenue Election Program (ACRE). **Contracts for both of these programs are required to be completed annually.** For the 2011 crop year, all producers sharing in the payment of the DCP or ACRE contract must sign, date, and return the contract to this office by **June 1, 2011.**

Since the majority of our dry-land operations have already enrolled, **we are now focusing our efforts in getting our irrigated farming operations to enroll.** If you're an irrigated producer, and your farming interests have not changed from 2010, or if they have changed but you know what ground you will be farming in 2011, please contact this office now to begin the DCP/ACRE enrollment process.

CRP SIGNUP DEADLINE APPROACHES

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general signup ends Friday, April 15, 2011. CRP allows producers to enroll land in ten year contracts that help preserve environmentally sensitive land. In exchange for idling the land, producers receive annual rental payments and 50 percent of the cost to establish the cover. Rental rates are tied to county average rental rates and the productivity of the soils in the offered acreage. In general, no other income can be derived from the land while under contract.

Eligibility and ranking scores are based on several factors. Eligible land must have been planted to an annual crop or conserving use in at least four years between 2002 and 2007. In addition, the land must have an erodibility index of 8 or greater, be in the state air quality or wildlife Conservation Priority Area or be CRP expiring in 2011.

Offers will be ranked using the Environment Benefits Index. Points will be awarded based on the environmental and habitat benefits of the proposed cover planted. More points are awarded for native covers. Existing CRP covers may need to be replanted to maximize the score. Extra points will be awarded for the most erosive land and bids that include pollinator habitat on 10% of the acreage.

TREE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IS AVAILABLE

In response to both the freezing weather events occurring in mid-November 2010 and February 2011, and the receipt of producer reports that possible tree and vine loss has occurred, the Grant County FSA Office has announced the availability of funds through the Tree Assistance Program (TAP). This program is designed to assist eligible orchardists and nursery tree growers in the replanting or rehabilitation of trees and vines that were severely damaged or lost because of the freezing weather.

To be eligible for TAP assistance, producers must have suffered more than a 15 percent death loss due to the freezing temperatures after adjustment for normal mortality. Producers must also have purchased a policy or plan of insurance under the Federal Crop Insurance or Non-Insured Assistance Program for all crops grown by the producer.

Producers can receive assistance for up to 500 acres of trees or vines. TAP is a cost-reimbursement program, with benefits covering up to 70% of the replant costs, and 50% of pruning, removal and other costs for replacing or salvaging damaged trees. Cost share reimbursement will occur after the restoration work has been completed and bills have been submitted to this office. All restoration work must be completed within 12 months from the approval date of the TAP application.

TAP applications must be filed by the producer within 90 days from the later of the actual disaster event, or the date when the loss of trees or vines becomes apparent. Interested producers are encouraged to contact the Grant County FSA Office at the above mentioned phone number, or go to FSA's website at www.fsa.usda.gov/tap.



NOTICE TO HISPANIC OR WOMEN FARMERS AND RANCHERS – COMPENSATION FOR CLAIMS DISCRIMINATION

If you believe that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) improperly denied farm loan benefits to you between 1981 and 2000 because you are Hispanic, or because you are female, you may be eligible to apply for compensation. You may be eligible if:

1. you sought a farm loan or farm-loan servicing from USDA during that period;
2. the loan was denied, provided late, approved for a lesser amount than requested, approved with restrictive conditions, or USDA failed to provide an appropriate loan service;
3. you believe these actions occurred because you are Hispanic or female.

If you want to register your name to receive a claims package, you can call the Farmer and Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429 or access the following website: www.farmerclaims.gov.

In 2011, a Claims Administrator will begin mailing claims packages to those who have requested one through the Call Center or website. The claims package will have detailed information about the eligibility and claims process. In order to participate, you must submit a claim to the Claims Administrator by the end of the claims period.

If you are currently represented by counsel regarding allegations of discrimination against USDA or in a lawsuit claiming discrimination by USDA, you should contact your counsel regarding this claims process. USDA cannot provide legal advice to you. You are not required to hire an attorney to file a claim, but you may contact a lawyer or other legal services provider in your community for additional guidance.

CRP MAINTENANCE REMINDER

With the growing season (hopefully) around the corner, this office wishes to remind those of you with acreage enrolled into CRP that weed control and stand maintenance is a requirement of remaining in compliance with the CRP contract. Every year, FSA & NRCS personnel conduct field visits to ensure that maintenance activities, including weed control, are being conducted on CRP acreage to ensure that stand density and species requirements are being met. Please remember the following items:

1. The primary nesting season for Washington State is April 1 through July 1. For CRP contracts that have certified as established, prior approval by the County Committee is required to conduct weed control measures such as spraying, mowing, or burning during this time period. The nesting season does not apply to those CRP contracts that have not yet been certified as being established.
2. Mid-management activities are included on most CRP contracts. These are required operations. The most popular activities are mowing and/or harrowing. Please review your plans to see what year these operations must be completed in. Cost share assistance is available for these operations.

Failure of CRP stands due to neglect of the CRP participant can lead to sizeable payment reductions, and in some cases, contract termination. Please include CRP maintenance as one of your spring work items.

NEW ADVISOR APPOINTED

The Washington State FSA Committee has approved the Grant County FSA Committee's recommendation to appoint Mrs. Gwinda Lutz as the new County Committee Advisor for the 2011 crop year. Gwinda and her husband Tony farm on the Royal Slope, producing small grains, vegetable crops, and running a vineyard. The Lutz farm has participated in various FSA programs for many years. Gwinda will be replacing Angela Pixton who served as Committee Advisor for the past 6 years. We thank Angela for her helpful insight and dedication to the County Committee, and we congratulate Gwinda on her new position!