



## Kittitas County FSA

607 Mt. View Avenue  
Ellensburg, WA 98926  
Office Phone: (509) 925-8585  
Office Fax: (509) 925-8591

### Office Hours

Monday – Friday  
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

### Office Staff

Brent Reitmeier, CED  
Betty Cervine, PT

### Farm Loan Staff

**(509) 454-5746**

Lisa Ruff, FLM  
Scott Smith, FLO  
Chris Werner, FLO  
Crispin Garza,  
Service Center Liaison  
Sandy Christensen, FLP Tech.



### County Committee

Rick Haberman, Chair  
Brent DeKoning, Vice Chair  
John Dyk, Regular Member  
Cristi Eaton, Advisor

### Next COC Meeting

Tuesday, September 20, 2011  
@ 9:00 a.m.

### Important Dates

**July 4<sup>th</sup>**   
Office closed in observance of  
the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday

**July 15<sup>th</sup>**  
Last day to file a Grassland  
Reserve Program application

**July 29<sup>th</sup>**  
Last day to file an Emergency  
Conservation Program  
application

**Aug. 1<sup>st</sup>**  
COC nominations are due in  
County Office and  
Reconstitution request  
deadline

### Websites:

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



## *Grassland Reserve Program*

The Farm Service Agency is accepting bids into the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) in Kittitas County. The voluntary program financially rewards ranchers for agreeing not to develop the land and for practicing proper grassland management. Sign up for the program continues through July 15, 2011 at the Kittitas County FSA office.

In exchange for a program payment, ranchers agree not to convert grassland to cropland or other types of development. The land may still be grazed or hayed. This sign up offers landowners rental agreements of 10, 15, or 20-year duration. An annual rental rate of \$11.00/acre has been established for rental agreements. To participate in GRP, ranchers must offer private land that includes contiguous acres of grassland. Rental agreements have a cap of 320 acres per farming operation. Ranchers in the program will be required to develop a grazing plan with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

FSA has about \$238,311 to implement the program in Kittitas County. The agency will rank applications based on the quality of management of the site, biodiversity, the soil quality, and the cost of the agreement. FSA will notify successful bidders for the rental agreements shortly after the sign up ends.

## *Emergency Conservation Program*

Agricultural producers throughout Kittitas County who lost fencing or other conservation practices due to January, 2011 flooding may be eligible for financial assistance through the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP). The program signup period takes place at the USDA Service Center in Ellensburg June 27, 2011 through July 29, 2011.

“ECP might be able to help livestock and seed crop producers in the county who need to repair fencing, grade land or remove debris from their land. Unusually warm weather caused moisture to fall in the mountains as rain rather than snow and led to early snow melts in the lower mountain elevations.

The program provides up to 75 percent cost-share for conservation practices on affected acreage. Producers can receive credit toward their share of the costs for their labor contributions in the restoration efforts. A site visit to the eligible acreage will be conducted prior to approval for the program. Producers generally have six months to complete restoration efforts. A conservation plan is not required for eligibility for assistance.

## *Farm Storage Facility Loan Program*

The Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program 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 required to provide a minimum 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. If a participant provides a 20 percent or greater down payment, then the requirement for a severance agreement for loans under \$50,000 will be waived. New loan terms of 7, 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 that CCC borrows from the Treasury Department.

## *Remember Hay Net?*

Producers are encouraged to use Hay Net on the FSA website <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet>. This online service allows producers with hay and those who need hay to post ads so they can make connections. Hay Net is a popular site for farmers and ranchers who have an emergency need, such as the one caused by the current wintry conditions. Individual ads can be posted free of charge by producers who complete a simple online registration form the first time they use the site.



## ***GIS***

As part of a program to digitally map the nation's farms and fields, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has established the Common Land Unit (CLU) as a standardized GIS (Geographic Information Systems) data layer that has allowed mapping to be integrated easily on a nationwide basis. The Farm Service Agency manages this CLU data layer through a distributed database environment for all field service centers throughout the country.

Using GIS provides for more consistent and more accurate land measurements, such as field acreage and acreage boundaries of conservation practices, such as riparian buffers. With high quality digital imagery, new land use changes (farm transfers and land subdivisions) can be easily updated. Maps can be created in either paper or digital format for FSA customers or the public. More information about the Common Land Unit and NAIP imagery can be found by visiting on-line, APFO (Aerial Photography Field Office) at [www.apfo.usda.gov](http://www.apfo.usda.gov).

## ***County Committee (COC) Nominations***

Since COC elections happen only once a year, here is an election refresher. For election purposes, counties are divided into local administrative areas, or LAAs. Each LAA selects one producer to serve a three-year term on the Farm Service Agency county committee. Each year, an election is held in an LAA for the committee member whose three year term is expiring. In counties with three LAAs, such as Kittitas County, one seat is up for election.

Producers who are residents in the LAA holding the election and are of legal voting age may be nominated to serve on the county committee. Individuals may nominate themselves or others as candidates. Also, organizations representing socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers may also nominate candidates. The nomination form, FSA-669A, is available at the county office or may be downloaded online at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov). To be valid, the nomination form must be signed by the person being nominated, indicating agreement to serve if elected. The completed nomination form must be returned to the county office by the close of business on Aug. 1, or postmarked by midnight Aug. 1, 2011.

## ***Farm Loan Programs***

The Farm Service Agency is committed to providing family farmers with loans to meet their farm credit needs. If you are having trouble getting the credit you need for your farm, or regularly borrow from FSA, direct and guaranteed loans are currently available.

Ask your lender about an FSA loan guarantee if you've had a setback and your lender is reluctant to extend or renew your loan.

Farm ownership loans or farm operating loans may be obtained as direct loans for a maximum of up to \$300,000. Guaranteed loans can reach a maximum indebtedness of \$1,119,000. Producers are encouraged to apply early so that a loan can be processed and funded in a timely manner.

To find out more about FSA loan programs, contact the Yakima County loan office staff at (509) 454-5746.

## ***Changing Banks?***

All Farm Service Agency payments are currently made electronically using Direct Deposit. To keep the system running smoothly, it is critical to keep the county office staff up to date on changes you might make in your financial institutions.

If you have changed accounts or institutions that might affect the direct deposit of your FSA payments, contact the FSA county office so we can update our files to insure continued uninterrupted service.