



NEWSLETTER



May 8, 2012

**Kittitas County
Farm Service Agency**

607 E. Mountain View Ave.
Ellensburg, WA 98926
Phone – 509-925-8585
Fax – 509-925-8591

Kittitas Co. Office Hours:

Wed. & Thurs. 9:00a.m.-3:30p.m.

**Yakima County Farm Service
Agency**

1606 Perry Street, Suite A
Yakima, WA 98902
Phone – 509-454-5746 x 2
Fax – 509-454-5682

Yakima Co. Office Hours:

Mon. – Fri. 8:00a.m. – 4:30p.m.

County Committee

Brent De Koning, Chairperson
John Dyk, Vice Chairperson
Rick Haberman, Member
Cristi Eaton, Advisor

Office Staff

Lisa Ruff, Acting CED
Maria De La Mora, PT
Jennifer DeWeese, PT
Kimberly Miller, PT

Farm Loan Staff

Lisa Ruff, FLM
Scott Smith, FLO
Crispin Garza, SCL
Sandy Christensen, FLPT

Next COC Meeting

June, 2012 (date to be determined)

Dates to Remember

- June 1 – DCP/ACRE sign up deadline
- June 1 – 2010 SURE sign up deadline
- June 30 – Acreage report deadline
- August 1 – Deadline to nominate for County Committee

IMPORTANT UPDATE

Federal budget cuts are now affecting the Farm Service Agency (FSA) nationwide. Every state has been required to reduce staffing levels through early retirements and employee buyouts. Program Technician Betty Cervine accepted early retirement last November and County Executive Director Brent Reitmeier has accepted a new position with FSA as CED for Snohomish-Skagit counties effective May 6, 2012.

Employee retirements and relocations have impacted many counties in Washington State. With the staffing reductions, it is not possible to keep the Kittitas County FSA office open as usual. The following changes were discussed during the May 3 County Committee meeting:

New Office Hours:

Wednesday and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Who will be providing assistance:

The staff of the Yakima County FSA office is experienced, knowledgeable, and willing to assist you and answer your questions. Program Technicians Jennifer DeWeese, Kimberly Miller, and Maria De La Mora will be taking turns staffing the office in addition to being available by phone in Yakima.

The Yakima County FSA loan staff has been and will continue to provide service to the Kittitas County producers both through the direct and guaranteed loans as well as the farm storage facility loans.

How we'll help you:

- If you need assistance when the Kittitas County office is closed, call the Yakima County office at 509-454-5746 ext. 2 or Fax 509-454-5682.
- Phone, Fax, and email can be used to conduct much of your business.
- Multi-county producers have the option to transfer their records to other counties. Contact the office for more information on this process.
- If reduced hours create a hardship, you may request in writing a new administrative county that is contiguous to Kittitas County. Contact the office for more information on this process.
- Appointments are encouraged so that we can have all of your information available to decrease the amount of waiting time and possible return trips.

The Farm Service Agency's role is to serve our producers regardless of your location, and we have the technology and available resources to minimize the impact of reduced staffing.

The Yakima County staff has already begun reviewing producer records for sign-ups and acreage reporting. You may be contacted by them to schedule an appointment or to clarify certain matters. The questions are routine in the nature of conducting business and are the same questions asked of all of our producers.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your County Committee members or Acting CED, Lisa Ruff. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

MESSAGE FROM BRENT

Kittitas County farmers and Ranchers:

I'd like to let you know that I am leaving my position as CED at the Kittitas County USDA FSA office.

I have really enjoyed my eight years in Ellensburg and I appreciate having had the opportunity to work with you.

Thank you for the support and encouragement you have provided me during my time in Kittitas County.

Even though I will miss my colleagues, farmers, ranchers and Kittitas County, I am looking forward to starting a new phase of my career which will be a shared manager/CED between Skagit and Snohomish counties.

Please keep in touch. I can be reached at my work email address brent.reitmeier@wa.usda.gov or my work phones, 425-444-3131 or 360-428-7758.

Thanks again. It's been a pleasure working with you.

Best Regards,
Brent Reitmeier

2012 DCP/ACRE DEADLINE

2012 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) enrollment began Jan. 23, 2012, and ends June 1, 2012. Appointments are being scheduled to sign up producers. If you have not been contacted for an appointment, please contact the Yakima County FSA office.

ACREAGE REPORTING DEADLINE

Acreage reports are required under the 2008 Farm Bill to maintain eligibility for the DCP and ACRE programs, as well as CRP, NAP, SURE and most livestock disaster programs. Reports are also required for commodity loan eligibility. **June 30, 2012** is the final date to timely certify. Beyond that date, fees will be assessed for late-filed acreage reporting.

FARM CHANGES AND RECONSTITUTIONS

Any changes in your farm's physical makeup, such as adding or removing land, can impact your acreage bases. Farm reconstitutions must be requested by **August 1** to be effective for the 2012 program year. Your farm must comply with program requirements as it is currently structured, including required signatures and acreage reporting. Requesting a farm reconstitution after signup could delay your payment, require refunds, or require the process to be completed again.

COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION

Local farmers and ranchers have an opportunity to influence federal farm programs. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting nominations for the Kittitas County Committee between **June 15 and August 1, 2012**.

The FSA county committee system provides a unique federal government experience. Farmers and ranchers are elected by their peers to help the agency administer farm programs and provide an important information link between producers and the agency.

The three-person committee is the place producers can appeal most agency determinations. The committee also makes decisions which can impact program payments. It meets approximately once a month.

To be eligible for involvement, producers must participate or cooperate in at least one FSA program and be of legal voting age. Nomination forms must be submitted to the local FSA office.

The committee draws its members from local administrative areas (LAAs). Counties are broken up into administrative areas for the purposes of representation and voting. This year's election is for LAA 2. This area is known as the Denmark Area and encompasses the area east of Canyon Road (Alt. Route 821) to the Grant County boundary line and south of Whisky Dick Mountains to Military or the Yakima County boundary line.

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 is up for reelection each year. Committee members are compensated for official duty hours.

We encourage all producers to consider being a candidate. Producers benefit from a diverse committee representing all of agriculture in our area.

More information about the elections and nomination forms may be obtained from the local FSA office or the Farm Service Agency website -

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=newsroom&subject=landing&topic=cce>.