July 2008

Twin Harbors/Lewis County FSA News

Twin Harbors/Lewis County FSA Office
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Office Hours
Monday – Friday
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

County Committee
Byron Bentson, Chair
Vic Boekelman, V-Chair
Sam Zion, Member
Leo Zylstra, Member
Ann Aho, Advisor
Liz Anderson, Advisor

Office Staff
Lynne White, Acting
County Executive Director

Farm Loan Staff
Mark Turner, FLM (Lynden)
Jeff Peterson, FLO
Ruth Wynn, FLT

Next COC Meeting
August 19, 2008
9:30 AM

Last Day to Accept Nominating Petitions for COC Elections
August 1, 2008

Acreage Reports Due By
August 15, 2008

DCP Signup Ends
September 30, 2008

Keeping Up on the Latest Farm Bill Information

FSA is implementing the 2008 Farm Bill as quickly as rules can be written and software developed to process applications. Information may be available in between newsletter distributions. To get the latest information as it becomes available, you may access the FSA website for Washington at http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa. An RSS Feed has been put on the press release pages of the state and national websites. The RSS Feed sends an automatic notification to your computer whenever a posting is made to the page with the RSS Feed. Contact the county office if you would like information on how to use an RSS Feed.

DCP Signup Underway – Make an Appointment Now

Producers have until September 30, 2008 to apply for the 2008 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payment Program (DCP). Because of the shortened application period, producers should call the office for an appointment. Online DCP signup is also available.

Producers may elect to receive a 22% advance direct payment, to be issued after contract approval. Final direct payments will be issued after October 1, 2008. A fact sheet that includes direct payment rates is available at http://www.fsa.usda.gov/DCP.

A new provision prohibits DCP payments for farms with 10 or less total base acres. The rule is waived if the farm is wholly owned by a socially disadvantaged or limited resource farmer. Multiple owners on a farm may differ as to which of the criteria they meet, but each must meet one of the criteria to qualify for payments. Farm operators need not meet these criteria. For entity owners, all members must meet one of these conditions.

For DCP, a socially disadvantaged farmer is a member of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group, without regard to their individual qualities. Limited resource qualifications can be determined in an automated system at http://www.lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov/tool.asp. Contact the county office if you are uncertain if this waiver applies to you.

By signing a 2008 DCP contract, you certify that adjusted gross income (AGI) provisions are met, as provided by the contract appendix. Entities and joint operations that sign a DCP contract certify AGI compliance for both the entity and for all entity or joint operation members, to the fifth level. Agents who sign a contract, using FSA-211, Power-of-Attorney, do not need to have AGI /CCC-526 authority designated on the FSA-211.

Crop acreage reports must be filed before final direct payments can be issued. Timely filed 2008 reports are due August 15, 2008.

2008 Farm Records Changes

Farm reconstitution requests received after May 22, 2008, for farms with 10 or less total base acres, may not be approved unless an ownership change occurred after that date. All owners and ownership shares on each farm to be combined under this exception must be identical. All other divisions or combinations for farms participating in DCP must be requested by August 1, 2008.

How to Apply Online for DCP

Signing up online can save you time and fuel costs. If you have your online authorization, you may visit http://www.fsa.usda.gov/edcp and click “Access eDCP Service.” You can obtain the necessary USDA Level 2 eAuthentication account (authorization) by registering online at http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov and then visiting the local USDA Service Center once to verify your identity. FSA has strict security measures to protect participants’ private information. Only authorized federal employees have access to information producers submit electronically.

Disaster Program Changes and Deadlines

The 2008 Farm Bill created new disaster assistance programs, made others permanent, and made changes to current programs. Most importantly, Congress tied all disaster assistance

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eligibility to producers obtaining a minimum CAT level of crop insurance or NAP coverage for uninsurable crops for all crops on all of a producer's farms. Producers will be able to apply for the new disaster programs to cover 2008 crops even though application for coverage dates have passed for crop insurance and NAP. A one-time waiver allows you to purchase buy-in **CAT or NAP by September 16**. This will only enable you to meet the requirement for the new disaster programs and will not provide you with crop insurance or NAP coverage if you did not meet the original application deadline.

New programs include: Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE), Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), Tree Assistance Program (TAP), Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP). A fifth new disaster program, the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) is exempt from the crop insurance/NAP requirement. All programs cover losses due to natural disasters only.

SURE covers crop losses on the whole farm when the county receives a disaster designation or losses exceed 50% of the farm's total production. Payments are made on 60% of the difference between the SURE guarantee and total farm revenue. LFP provides a payment to ranchers who suffer losses due to drought or fire. TAP provides compensation to orchardists and nursery producers to replant trees and vines. ELAP addresses unique disasters not covered by any other program. LIP provides payment for loss of livestock.

There is a buy-in fee for CAT level crop insurance and NAP coverage. The fee is $100 per crop with a maximum of $300 per administrative county and a $900 maximum for multiple counties. CAT and NAP fees are treated separately and the maximums apply separately to each type of coverage. Producers are credited for any crop insurance or NAP coverage previously paid for 2008 crops. Fees are waived for limited resource, socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers. Let the FSA staff know if you think this applies to you when signing up for the programs.

FSA is handling the signup and application for both CAT and NAP for the 2008 crop buy-in waiver. For 2009 crops, standard crop insurance and NAP deadlines and purchase rules are in effect. Contact the office for more information.

Joint and Assigned Payment Authorizations

Due to the new 2008 Farm Bill, all joint or assigned payment authorizations filed on CCC-36 or CCC-37 must have been signed and filed on or after May 22, 2008, for 2008 DCP. This requirement does not apply to CRP.

Judge Halts Use of Conservation Reserve Program

A federal judge has granted a temporary restraining order on the use of the CRP critical feed use. The restraining order suspends all critical use haying and grazing on CRP acreage until further notice.

In June, Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer opened most CRP lands for haying and grazing after the bird nesting season. The Secretary made the decision to provide relief from high and increasing livestock feed prices. Critical use had been approved in Washington from August 2 to November 10, 2008. This has been suspended until after a court hearing.

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