



TWIN HARBORS-LEWIS COUNTIES

# FSA NEWS

February 2009

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**Web Sites:**

FSA: [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)  
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**Office Hours:**

Monday – Friday  
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

**County Committee:**

Byron Bentson  
Vic Boekelman  
Sam Zion  
Allen Devlin  
Leo Zylstra

**Advisors:**

Ann Aho  
Liz Anderson

**County Executive Director**

Jeff Peterson

**Staff:**

Lynne White, PT  
Ruth Wynn, FLPT

**Farm Loan Manager:**

Mark Turner  
Whatcom Co FSA Office  
Lynden, WA  
(360) 354-5658 Ext 2

**In This Issue**

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MILC Signup Underway

New Disaster Assistance  
Requirements  
(NAP/Crop Insurance)

New ECP Signup Begins

**IMPORTANT DEADLINES  
TO REMEMBER!!**

**NEXT FSA COUNTY  
COMMITTEE MEETING**

Tuesday, March 17th.  
9:30 am

**Handicapped**

**Accommodations:** Special accommodations will be arranged for those persons with a physical, vision, or hearing impaired disability. If special accommodations are needed, please contact our office.

**Emergency Loan Program (See back for ECP Info)**

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides emergency loans to help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding, other natural disasters, and quarantine.

Emergency Loan funds can be used to restore or replace essential property, pay production expenses for the disaster year, pay family living expenses, reorganize the farming operation, and to refinance certain debts.

Emergency Loans can be made to farmers or ranchers who own or operate land in a county declared by the President as a disaster area or designated by the Secretary of Agriculture. They must be established farmers, citizens or permanent residents, be unable to receive credit elsewhere, and have collateral and repayment ability.

Borrowers are required to keep acceptable records, operate in accordance with the farm plan they have developed with FSA officials, obtain crop insurance, and may be required to participate in financial management training. Collateral is required. Producers can borrow up to \$500,000. The term of the loan is based on the repayment ability of the applicant, not to exceed 20 years for production losses or 40 years for losses to real estate.

Applications must be received within 8 months of the county's disaster designation date. Contact your local FSA office to see if your county was included in the designation.

- Administrator's Physical Loss Designation N-971, declared 1/26/09. (Winter Storms that occurred 12/14/08 – 1/15/09)
- Presidential Disaster Declaration DR-1817, declared 1/30/09 (Revised 2/11/09). (Severe winter storms, landslides, mudslides and flooding which occurred 1/6 – 1/16 2009)
- Secretarial Disaster Designation S-2854, declared 2/11/09. (Drought, unusually cool weather & freeze.) Westside counties are contiguous counties.

**Power of Attorney Forms – REVISED**

If you have an FSA-211, Power of Attorney on file with your local FSA office, you may need to complete a new one for any future FSA programs you want to sign up for. The form has been revised recently.

**Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) Program for Dairy Producers**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture began accepting MILC applications in December 2008 and will continue to do so through the program's expiration date, Sept 30, 2012.

The Farm Bill made three key changes in the MILC program. Under the 2008 Act, the MILC payment rate and the per-operation poundage limit were modified, depending on when the milk is produced. In addition, a "feed cost adjuster," was introduced. It adjusts the previous \$16.94 per hundredweight (cwt.) benchmark price upward depending on the cost of feed rations.

The Farm Service Agency issues MILC payments on an operation-by-operation basis. The production limit per operation is 2.985 million pounds (about 145 cows) for each fiscal year from Oct. 1, 2008, through Aug. 31, 2012. The production limitation reverts back to the original limit of 2.4 million pounds per fiscal year in Sept. 2012. The 2008 Farm Bill also changed provisions for payment eligibility to add an adjusted gross income (AGI) limit of \$500,000 of annual non-farm income.

Participating dairy operations must select the month of the fiscal year to start receiving payments for eligible production. The start month must either be the month the contract is submitted or some later month. Changes in the month may be made from year to year so long as the designation is made by the fourteenth of the month proceeding the new start month. Eligible dairy producers are those who commercially produce milk in the United States. To receive program approval, producers must enter into a MILC contract and provide monthly milk marketing data. Interested farmers may contact the FSA office for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for MILC.

**2009 Eligibility for Disaster Assistance Tied to Crop Insurance and NAP**

USDA's Spokane Risk Management Agency (RMA) Office reminds producers of the important link between Federal crop insurance and FSA's Supplemental Agricultural Disaster Assistance programs including the new SURE program. While a "buy in" waiver was allowed for 2008, producers **must** purchase insurance in the 2009 and future crop years in order to qualify for disaster assistance. (Continued on page 2)

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Beginning with the 2009 crop year, to maintain eligibility for the Supplemental Disaster Programs, producers must obtain a policy or plan of insurance of at least catastrophic (CAT) level coverage for 2009. Note: the more crop insurance coverage a producer has, the more the SURE guarantee will be. For those crops that are non-insurable, coverage under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) must also be timely obtained. **Sign up for spring planted crops ends 3/15/09.** The public may access CCC-471 NAP Basic Provisions (BP) through the FSA web site located at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

**Note:** After accessing the web site, CLICK "Disaster Assistance Programs". On the Disaster Assistance Programs Home Page CLICK "View NAP Basic Provisions" located under "I Want To..." Copies of CCC-471 NAP BP are also available at the FSA office.

### USDA to Conduct Referendum on Lamb Check-off Program

Beginning February 2, sheep producers and handlers will have the opportunity to vote on whether to continue to pay an assessment which funds marketing and research efforts of the American Lamb Board. The USDA will conduct a nationwide referendum on whether to continue or terminate the Lamb, Promotion, Research and Information Act of 1996. The referendum ends February 27, 2009.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service will conduct the referendum with the assistance of USDA's Farm Service Agency. Eligible sheep producers and handlers may vote by mail, fax, or in person in the county where their farm records are maintained with the Farm Service Agency. If they do not participate in FSA programs, they may vote at the county FSA office where they own or rent land.

To be eligible to vote, persons must certify and provide documentation, such as a sales receipt or remittance form, which shows they have been engaged in the production, feeding, or slaughtering of sheep during calendar year 2008. Persons eligible to vote may obtain form LS-86 from their county FSA office or online at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/ismarketingprograms>.

USDA monitors activities of the American Lamb Board. The mandatory program is financed by producers, breeders, feeders and exporters who are assessed one-half cent per pound when live ovine animals are sold. The first handler, primarily packers, pays an additional 30 cents per head on ovine animals purchased for slaughter.

### County Committee Election Results

Ballots were counted Monday, December 4, 2008. Leo Zylstra from Lewis County and Vic Boekelman from Pacific Co were re-elected to another three year term as committee members. Donald Taylor was elected as 1<sup>st</sup> alternate for LAA 5. We would like to thank all of the candidates who ran and also thank all the producers that took the time to vote.

### NEW - Emergency Conservation Program Signup

Financial assistance is available for farmers and ranchers who have debris to remove or conservation practices to repair as a result of the January storms and floods in Lewis, Grays Harbor and Pacific counties. The Farm Service Agency will allocate \$950,000 in Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) funding in nine Washington counties to help producers recover from the storm damage. Eligible producers will receive cost-share assistance of up to 75 percent of the cost of the approved practice, as determined by FSA county committees. **Twin Harbors/Lewis FSA Office will start signup on 2/23/09 and will accept applications through 4/3/09.** The ECP program gives producers additional resources to remove debris from farmland to restore fences, conservation structures, grade, shape and reseed farmland damaged by a natural disaster. For a producer's land to be eligible, the disaster must create new conservation problems that, if untreated, would impair or endanger the land and affect its productive capacity. Conservation problems existing prior to the applicable disaster are ineligible for ECP assistance. More information on ECP and other disaster assistance programs is available at the local FSA office (360) 748-0083 ext 2 and online at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa>.

### Important Dates and Deadlines

<b>1/22/09 – 9/30/12</b> - Extended signup for MILC Program	<b>2/27</b> – Signup ends for 2005-07 Crop Disaster Program (CDP)
<b>2/2 – 2/27</b> – Lamb Promotion, Research, and Information Order Referendum	<b>3/15</b> – NAP signup deadline for spring planted crops
<b>2/23- 4/3/09</b> – ECP Signup (for current disaster)	<b>6/1</b> – DCP Signup Ends.

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