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Twin Harbors - Lewis County FSA Updates

Twin Harbors - Lewis County FSA Office

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FSA Seeks Candidates for County Committee

The Farm Service Agency is looking for candidates for the upcoming grower-elected county committee election. FSA is accepting nominations through August 1, 2013.

FSA county committees make decisions which impact program payments. They bring local knowledge of farming practices, prices and conditions to program implementation. Also, producers can appeal most agency determinations to the local county committee.

FSA encourages all interested agricultural producers, including women and minority growers, to seek nomination. Eligible candidates must participate or cooperate in any Farm Service Agency program and be of legal voting age. Even if you are not currently participating in FSA programs, you may be considered eligible under the cooperation criteria if you have farm records on file with FSA.

The Twin Harbors - Lewis County Committee draws its members from local administrative areas (LAA's). Nominated by local farmers and ranchers, candidates must live in the LAA 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 are up for re-election each year.

This year's election takes place for LAA's 1 and 2. LAA 1 runs along the coasts of Pacific and Grays Harbor counties and incorporates the Quinault Indian Nation. LAA 2 covers the rest of Grays Harbor County. A map of FSA county committee election areas can be found on the agency's website <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa>.

Elected county committee members receive an hourly wage for their attendance and representation at county committee meetings.

Elections will take place in the fall and newly elected committee members begin their terms January 1, 2014. FSA will mail ballots to all eligible voters. Anyone not receiving a ballot by Nov. 4 can contact the office to request one.

Additional information and nomination forms may be requested from the FSA office. Nomination forms may also be obtained online at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa>.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a tool for landowners to enhance and protect water quality, fish habitat and stream stability through the use of riparian buffers. Grass filter strips and wetland enhancement practices are also available for waterways that drain into these streams. The program is administered locally through the partnership of the Grays Harbor, Pacific, and Lewis County Conservation Districts and the Twin Harbors - Lewis County FSA Committee.

Our goal for the CREP program is geared towards habitat enhancement for salmon species. The CREP program provides for:

- stream stabilization
- reduction of sediments
- increasing wildlife habitat
- creating shade to lower water temperature

Through a unique state and federal partnership, producers can receive annual rental payments equal to 150%-200% of normal CRP rates. Participants can also earn one-time \$100/acre signing incentives and cost-share assistance that usually covers 100% of installation costs. Maintenance payments are also available for the first few years of the contract.

Milk Income Loss Contract Program (MILC)

MILC payments for May 2013 production have recently been processed at a rate of \$0.742 per hundred weight. In order to receive payments, producers must have current eligibility paperwork completed. If you have any questions concerning payments, please contact our office.

Current and previous payment rate information for Fiscal year 2012 and 2013 is listed here and can also be found on our Washington State FSA website:

Month	BCI Price-\$(16.94)	NAD-FRC-\$(7.35)	Adjustment Trigger	Final Rate
Fiscal Year 2012				
June	18.49	11.78	21.53	1.36775
July	18.76	12.61	22.40	1.63817
August	19.80	13.27	23.08	1.47607
September	20.84	12.38	22.16	0.59443
Fiscal Year 2013				
October	22.13	12.40	22.18	0.02368
November	23.95	12.71	22.50	0.00000
December	24.64	12.61	22.40	0.00000
January	22.22	12.69	22.48	0.11800
February	21.46	12.83	22.62	0.52224
March	21.05	12.93	22.73	0.75456
April	20.91	12.68	22.46	0.69884
May	21.01	12.86	22.66	0.74236
June	22.18	TBD	TBD	TBD

Microloan Program

FSA is offering more flexible access to credit through the new microloan program. The program is an attractive loan alternative for smaller farming operations like specialty crop producers and operators of community supported agriculture (CSA).

Microloans can be used for all approved operating expenses as authorized by the FSA Operating Loan Program, including but not limited to:

- Initial start-up expenses;

- Annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents;
- Marketing and distribution expenses;
- Purchase of livestock, equipment, and other materials essential to farm operations;
- Minor farm improvements such as wells and coolers.
- Hoop houses to extend the growing season.

The application process for microloans will be simpler, requiring less paperwork to fill out. Requirements for managerial experience and loan security have been modified to accommodate smaller farm operations, beginning farmers and those with no farm management experience. Applicants will need to have some farm experience; however, FSA will consider an applicant's small business experience as well as any experience with a self-guided apprenticeship as a means to meet the farm management requirement.

Eligible applicants may obtain a microloan for up to \$35,000. The repayment term may vary and will not exceed seven years. Annual operating loans are repaid within 12 months or when the agricultural commodities produced are sold. Interest rates are based on the regular operating loan rates that are in effect at the time of the microloan approval or microloan closing, whichever is less. Currently the rate is 1.25%. Contact the county office for more information.

Use of FSA Loan Funds

If the cost-share requirement on a conservation practice is preventing you from adopting the practice or a new tractor is needed on the farm, FSA may be able to help with the financing. FSA provides low interest, long-term loans to producers who have difficulty obtaining commercial credit.

Direct Farm Ownership Loans may be used to purchase land, construct buildings or other improvements and apply soil and water conservation practices. FSA also has a Beginning Farmer Down Payment program to help purchase a farm or ranch.

Producers may use Direct Operating Loans to purchase livestock, poultry, equipment, feed, seed, farm chemicals, and supplies; to apply soils and water conservation practices and to refinance indebtedness with certain limitations.

When a county or contiguous county receives a disaster designation, FSA makes Direct Emergency Loans available. These loans may be used to restore or replace essential property, pay all or part of production costs associated with the disaster year, pay essential family living expenses, reorganize the farming operation or refinance indebtedness with certain limitations.

FSA also makes available Guaranteed Loans through commercial lenders. Guaranteed Farm Ownership and Guaranteed Operating loans can be used for the same purposes as the corresponding Direct Loans but they may also be used to refinance debt. For more information about FSA loan programs, contact Jeff Peterson at 360-748-0083.

Farm Storage Facility Loans

The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFLP) 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 now required to provide a 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. New loan terms of seven, 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 which CCC borrows from the U.S. Treasury Department.

Funding is available in the form of a partial disbursement and the remaining final disbursement. The partial disbursement will be available after a portion of the construction has been completed. The final fund

disbursement will be made when all construction is completed. The maximum amount of the partial disbursement will be 50 percent of the projected and approved total loan amount.

Applications for FSFL must be submitted to the FSA county office that maintains the farm's records. An FSFL must be approved before any site preparation or construction begins. For more information about FSFL please visit your FSA county office or www.fsa.usda.gov.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Application Closing Dates for the 2014 Crop Year

FSA reminds producers that purchasing NAP coverage for crops not insurable through your crop insurance agent is a tool you can use to help mitigate your financial risk if the crop is lost or was prevented from being planted due to a natural weather related disaster. The NAP application closing dates to purchase coverage for the 2014 crop year are listed below:

5/1/2013 – Ornamental nursery

8/31/2013 – Artichokes; aquaculture; beets (for stecklings); cabbage (for seed or fresh); canola; carrots (for seed, fresh or processing); cauliflower (for seed or fresh); Christmas trees; floriculture; mushrooms; onions (for seed, fresh or processing); rapeseed; rutabaga (for seed or fresh); turf grass sod; turnips (for seed and fresh); and any other fall planted crops not mentioned in other closing dates.

9/30/2013 – Garlic, mint; perennial grazing, forage, mixed forage, and forage seed crops; wheat.

11/20/2013 – Perennial crops not listed in the 9/30 category; asparagus; berries; grapes; honey; hops; tree fruits and nuts.

3/15/2014 – Beets (for seed or fresh); buckwheat; camelina; mustard; radish (for seed or fresh); small grain forages (wheat, barley, oats, peas); and any other spring planted crops not mentioned in other closing dates.

NAP coverage should be purchased at least 30 days before the crop is planted, but no later than the application closing date.

NAP coverage cannot be offered on any crop for which Federal Crop Insurance is available in the county. If you have any questions regarding NAP availability or NAP application closing dates, please contact the Name county office for more information.

Farmland Additions or Reductions

Any land reductions or additions on your farm can impact your acreage bases and various program benefits. Be sure to report any changes, such as land purchases or sales, added or dropped leases, or changes in land ownership, to FSA as soon as possible. Failure to report changes in your farm(s) can prevent you from being able to sign up for programs until FSA has time to update our records. In addition, farm records not properly constituted with all the right landowners can cause you to be ineligible for certain programs if the records are not updated by the program deadline.

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If you have questions about FSA activities, please view our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page or you may also [Search](#) our web site. These features are designed to assist you in obtaining the information you are seeking.

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