



NEWSLETTER



November 2012

Ferry County

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Okanogan County

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Office Hours

Mon – Fri 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Ferry County Committee

Jerry Larson, Chairperson
Kathleen Olson, V.-Chairperson
Bill Floyd, Member
Luanne Finley, Advisor

Okanogan Co. Committee

Stan Stout, Chairperson
Jeff Delfeld, Vice-Chairperson
Mark Timmerman, Member
Sharon Redthunder, Advisor
Victor Castro, Advisor

Office Staff

Gary Breiler, CED
Stu Skidmore, FLM
Sandy Hinger, FLT
Cliffene Coyne, PT
Virginia Lane, PT

Next COC Meeting

Ferry – 12/04/2012
Okanogan – 12/06/2012

Dates to Remember

Nov. 20 – Sales closing for fruit insurance or NAP.

Nov. 22 – Office closed for federal holiday.

Dec. 15 – Acreage reporting deadline for fall planted crops.

FSA Web Sites

State- <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa>
National- <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>
USDA- <http://www.usda.gov>

COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

The County Committee is a unique system under which Federal farm programs are to be administered locally. Producers who are eligible to participate in these programs elect a three person county committee, which reviews county office operations and makes some of the decisions on how to apply the programs. This grassroots approach gives you a much-needed say in how Federal actions affect your operations. Election ballots were recently mailed to all eligible voters in the applicable local administrative areas by our Kansas City Management Office. **Ballots must be returned by Monday, December 3, 2012.** Remember to sign the label in the ballot. Please also remember that Powers-of-Attorney cannot be used for signing ballots.

In Ferry County: **Jerry Larson** and **Sheila Anderson** are candidates for election in the Republic area (LAA No. 2).

In Okanogan County: **Stan Stout** and **Juan Torres** are candidates for election in the south western portion of the county (LAA No. 2).

SUPPLEMENTAL REVENUE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR 2011 CROP LOSSES

Signup for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) is now open and will continue through June 7, 2013. SURE covers weather related crop losses suffered during the 2011 crop year, that occurred by September 30, 2011.

Ferry and Okanogan County producers are eligible if they have suffered at least a 10% production loss to one or more crops of economic significance, since Okanogan County was declared a primary disaster county as designated by the Secretary of Agriculture and Ferry is contiguous to a primary county. SURE requires applicants to have carried Federal Crop Insurance and/or Noninsured Assistance Program (NAP) coverage on all crops of economic significance as a condition of eligibility. Socially disadvantaged, beginning farmers and ranchers, and limited resource farmers may be eligible for SURE without a policy or plan of insurance. Please contact us in order to apply for SURE, or if you have any questions regarding the program.

ACCESSIBILITY

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in any meeting, event or function should contact the county office. FSA is committed to making programs accessible to all customers.

SIGNATURE AUTHORITY FOR SPOUSES

Spouses may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest, unless written notification denying a spouse this authority has been provided to the county office. A spouse may not sign a Power of Attorney on behalf of the spouse, nor may they sign on behalf of the other as an authorized signatory for entities. Spouses also may not sign Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) statements on behalf of each other. Spouses must have Powers of Attorneys on file to sign for claim settlements such as promissory notes.

USDA ANNOUNCES HISPANIC AND WOMEN FARMER AND RANCHER CLAIMS PERIOD

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack recently announced a claim process open to Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA between 1981 and 2000 due to denial of application for loan or loan servicing assistance. The claim period began September 24, 2012, and will continue through March 25, 2013. The voluntary claims process will make available at least \$1.33 billion for cash awards and tax relief payments, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief, to eligible claimants. There are no filing fees to participate in the program. Information related to applying for consideration under the claim process may be obtained by calling 1-888-508-4429 or on the web at www.farmerclaims.gov. Claimants must register for a claims package (by calling the number or visiting the website) and the claims package will be mailed to claimants.

Independent legal services companies will administer the claims process and adjudicate the claims. Although there are no filing fees to participate and a lawyer is not required to participate in the claims process, persons seeking legal advice may contact a lawyer or other legal services provided.

CHANGES IN 2013 CROP ACREAGE REPORTING

Farm Service Agency and the Risk Management Agency have established joint acreage reporting dates; the changes will be effective beginning for the 2013 reporting year. Unfortunately, what that means is that FSA dates will now match the "earliest" acreage reporting date for insurable crops, rather than having one date for all crops in the county, which had previously been the case. The dates for Washington State for 2013 are as follows:

All fall planted wheat/small grains	12/15/2012	Perennial forages	07/15/2013
Fall planted peas	12/15/2012	CRP	07/15/2013
Fall planted canola	12/15/2012	Perennial fruits and grapes	01/15/2013
Spring planted crops	07/15/2013	Perennial Forage Crops*	07/15/2013

* Perennial forage crops covered under a Noninsured Assistance Program (NAP) policy are required to be reported not later than 15 days after the beginning of harvest of the crop (for range/pasture policies within 15 days from the beginning of the grazing).

Acreage reports accepted after the date(s) specified will be considered late filed, and subject to late filing provisions including a late filing fee. Due to the timing of announcing these changes, USDA has instituted a process to waive late filing fees in those instances where producers requested to file acreage timely but County office staff could not complete the request by the established deadline. In order to be considered for waiver of the late filing fee, applicants must have contacted their local FSA office requesting to file an acreage report by the applicable deadline, and have been placed on a register to accept the filing when FSA staff is available.

All **producers with winter wheat or other fall planted crops with a December 15 reporting deadline** are encouraged to contact our office to request an appointment as soon as possible, but before December 15, 2012. Please give us a call if you have any questions.

USE OF FSA LOAN FUNDS

FSA may be able to help you with financing your farming operation. We provide 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 Stu Skidmore or Sandy Hinger in our Okanogan Office at (509) 422-3292.

DEADLINE FOR 2013 CROP COVERAGE - FRUIT

The application closing date to purchase coverage for 2013 fruit crops is **November 20, 2012**. Contact your crop insurance agent for more information. Non-insured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage is available from FSA for crops where insurance is not available. Since catastrophic level coverage is not available for cherries, NAP can be purchased. November 20, 2012 is also the deadline for 2013 NAP for cherries. To apply for NAP coverage, an application fee of \$250 per crop, up to a \$750 cap per county must be paid. The maximum for multiple crops in more than one county is \$1,875 per crop year. In the past, in order to be eligible for crop disaster benefits, producers were **required** to have Federal Crop Insurance or NAP on **all crops** of economic significance in all counties. However this may change once the new farm bill is passed.