



NEWSLETTER



May 2012

Pierce County Farm Service Agency

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Office Hours

Mon. – Fri. 8:00 a.m – 4:30 p.m.

County Committee

Lucy Cerqui, Chair
Joy Garitone, Vice-Chair
Harry Petersen, Member
Paddy Lewis Irwin, Member

Office Staff

George R. Jaquish, CED
Kathy Modin, PT

Next COC Meeting

July 25, 2012

Farm Loan Staff

Mark Tuner, FLM
(360) 354-5658
Jeff Peterson, SFLO
(360) 748-0084

Dates to Remember

May 28 & July 4 – Office closed



More Information may be found
at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa>.

County Committee Elections

County Committee members play a crucial role in helping the county office staff implement the Farm Bill Programs. FSA County Committee members make decisions on disaster and conservation programs, emergency programs, commodity price support loan programs and other important agricultural issues. Members serve three-year terms. Nationwide, there are more than 7,800 farmers and ranchers serving on the FSA County Committee. Committees consist of three to five members who are elected by eligible local producers.

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.

This year, nominations are for a committee member to represent producers in Local Administrative Area (LAA) #3 and LAA #4.

LAA #3 - All of Thurston County

LAA #4 - King County south of I-90 to Lake Holms Rd. then east to the county line, also, that portion of Pierce County north of SR 512, east of I-5 at Lakewood and north of HWY 16 and then east of HWY 161 (South Hill) to 224th St. E, and west of HWY 162 south to Orting.

Common Acreage Reporting Dates

Implementation of common acreage reporting dates is a major step by the Risk Management Agency (RMA) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) to reduce duplication of acreage reporting. Common acreage reporting dates will allow producers to report acreage to crop insurance agents or FSA, without having to report the same information twice. Also, the common reporting dates between the two agencies will help reduce USDA operating costs by allowing the sharing of similar data across participating agencies within USDA.

This change does not reduce or modify the programs or services that RMA or FSA provides, but will enable most crop insurance agents and FSA office staff to collect information in a more uniform and efficient manner.

Washington producers may notice changes beginning with the 2012 crop year. Producers of insured crops are encouraged to work closely with their agents to ensure they comply with the requirements of their insurance policies with respect to timely reporting acreages. **No changes will occur to the FSA June 30 final reporting date in 2012.**

Changes will begin with the reporting of 2013 fall planted crops. Crops like winter wheat, winter barley, and fall canola will need to be reported on or before December 15, 2013. Growers

of perennial crops like apples, blueberries, cherries, cranberries, apricots, peaches, nectarines, grapes, pears and plums will be required to report by January 15, 2013. All other crops must be reported by July 15, 2013. Crops which will be harvested or grazed before the established reporting date must be reported before harvest or grazing begins.

The adoption of common reporting dates will allow producers to file a complete farm acreage report with either their local FSA office or their crop insurance agent. This adoption process may take time to fully develop.

Currently local FSA offices are accepting acreage reports for planted crops. Spring-planted crops must be reported by June 30, 2012. Producers may lessen time spent in the FSA office during the busy summer months by providing an acreage report for fall planted crops now. Producers of perennial crops can get a big jump on the 2012 crop by filing acreages now. Producers are reminded to report any and all acreage changes or losses as they occur.

Financing for Beginning Farmers and Socially Disadvantaged Applicants

FSA's loan programs are designed to help family farmers who are temporarily unable to obtain commercial credit. In many cases, these are beginning farmers who have insufficient net worth to qualify for commercial credit.

The law also requires FSA to reserve or target loan funds for exclusive use by beginning farmers. Funds remain targeted for beginning farmers in the guaranteed programs until April 1 of each year. In the direct programs,

funds are targeted for beginning farmers until September 1 of each year.

A beginning farmer or rancher is an individual or entity who:

- has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years
- substantially participates in the operation
- for Farm Ownership loan purposes, does not own a farm greater than 30 percent of the average size farm in the county
- for Farm Ownership loan purposes, must have participated in the business operation of a farm for at least 3 years.

Maximum amounts of indebtedness are \$300,000 for direct loans and \$1,214,000 (amount varies annually based on inflation) for guaranteed loans.

FSA has a down payment program to assist beginning farmers and socially disadvantaged applicants to purchase a farm or ranch. This program also provides a means for retiring farmers and ranchers to transfer their land to a future generation.

Eligible beginning farmers and socially disadvantaged applicants are given first priority to purchase FSA acquired properties. For more information about FSA loan programs, contact Jeff Peterson, SFLO at (360) 748-0084.

New AGI Forms Required for 2012 Participants

FSA and NRCS program participants, including all members of participating entities, must meet certain Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) requirements to qualify for benefits. Starting for the 2012 crop year, a new AGI form has

been developed that both reports whether an applicant or member meets the AGI requirements and authorizes the IRS to confirm that information for FSA.

The new form also reflects an additional AGI limitation applicable only to 2012 direct payments. In addition to the \$500,000 average nonfarm AGI and the \$750,000 average farm AGI limitation, a \$1 million average AGI limitation will be applicable for 2012 direct payments.

New this year, most power-of-attorney authorizations will not work for this form, so the form will have to be signed by the participant or entity member themselves. IRS will not accept FSA power-of-attorney forms. These new AGI forms are available today from your county office or on the FSA internet site.

GovDelivery

The Farm Service Agency is moving toward a paperless operation. Producers are asked to enroll in the new GovDelivery system which will provide notices, newsletters and electronic reminders instead of a hard copy through the mail. Please contact us for instructions and information.