



# NEWSLETTER



**November, 2012**

**Pierce County  
Farm Service Agency**

1011 E Main # 107  
Puyallup, WA 98373-6768  
Phone – (253) 845-9272  
Fax – (253) 445 9934

**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

**Farm Loan Staff**

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

**Next COC Meeting**

December 6, 2012

**Dates to Remember**

Office closed:

- [Nov. 12 For Veterans Day](#)
- [Nov. 22 Thanksgiving Day](#)
- [Dec. 25 Christmas](#)
- [Jan. 1 New Years Day](#)

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

## **Farm Service Agency Administrator Urges Farmers and Ranchers to Vote in County Committee Elections Beginning Monday, November 5**

WASHINGTON, November 1, 2012 - Farm Service Agency (FSA) Administrator Juan M. Garcia announced today that the 2012 FSA county committee elections will begin on Monday, November 5, with the mailing of ballots to eligible voters. The deadline to return the ballots to local FSA offices is December 3, 2012.

“The role and input of our county committee members is more vital than ever,” said Garcia. “New county committee members provide input and make important decisions on the local administration of disaster and conservation programs. With better participation in recent years, we also have seen promising increases in the number of women and minority candidates.”

Eligible voters who do not receive ballots in the coming week can obtain ballots from their local USDA Service Center. December 3, 2012, is the last day for voters to submit ballots in person to local USDA Service Centers. Ballots returned by mail must also be postmarked no later than December 3. Newly elected committee members and their alternates will take office January 1, 2013.

To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm also may be eligible to vote. Agricultural producers in each county submitted candidate nominations during the nomination period, which ended August 1.

While FSA county committees do not approve or deny farm operating loans, they make decisions on disaster and conservation programs, emergency programs, commodity price support loan programs and other agricultural issues. Members serve three-year terms. Nationwide, there are about 7,700 farmers and ranchers serving on FSA county committees. Committees consist of three to 11 members that are elected by eligible producers.

More information on county committees, such as the new 2012 fact sheet and brochures, can be found on the FSA website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/elections](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections) or at a local USDA Service Center.

## **2008 Farm Bill Expiration – What Does It Mean to You?**

Many programs and policies of the Farm Service Agency were authorized under the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) through September 30, 2012. As of October 1, 2012, the authority or funding provided under the 2008 Farm Bill for USDA to operate a number of these programs expired, and the authority and funding for additional programs will expire in the coming months. For the latest information about FSA programs common in Washington State please call your local FSA County Office. If Congress extends all, or a portion of, the current farm bill or passes a new farm bill, the information may change.

### **Increased Guaranteed Loan Limit**

The Farm Service Agency has announced that the loan limit for the Guaranteed Loan Program will increase to \$1,302,000 on October 1, 2012. The limit is adjusted annually based on data compiled by the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

The lending limit increases every year according to an inflation index. The maximum combined guaranteed and direct farm loan indebtedness will also increase to \$1,602,000.

As a reminder, the one-time loan origination fee charged on FSA guaranteed Farm Ownership and Operating loans is 1.5 percent of the guaranteed portion of the loan.

Producers should contact their local FSA County Offices with questions about farm loans.

### **IRS 1099 Changes**

Calendar year 2012 has brought changes to the way FSA reports farm program payments to the producer and to the IRS. In past years, IRS Forms 1099-G would be issued to show all program payments received from the Farm Service Agency, regardless of the amount. Starting with calendar year 2012, producers whose total reportable payments from FSA are less than \$600 will not receive IRS Form 1099-G. Also, producers who receive payments from more than one county will only receive one Form 1099-G if the total of all payments from all counties is \$600 or more. The same changes will apply to producers and vendors who normally receive IRS Form 1099-MISC from FSA.

### **USDA Announces Hispanic and Women Farmer and Rancher Claims Period Now Open**

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has announced that Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA in past decades can file claims between September 24, 2012 and March 25, 2013.

The process offers a voluntary alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or female farmer and rancher who can prove that USDA denied their applications for loan or loan servicing assistance for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000.

Call center representatives can be reached at 1-888-508-4429. Claimants must register for a claims package (by calling the number or visiting the website) and the claims package will be mailed to claimants. All those interested in learning more or receiving information about the claims process and claims packages are encouraged to attend meetings in your communities about the claims process and contact the website or claims telephone number.

**Website:** [www.farmerclaims.gov](http://www.farmerclaims.gov)