

F S A F a r m N e w s

Skagit-Island-San Juan County Farm Service Agency

2021 E. College Way Ste 212

Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

State FSA Website: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa>

Phone: (360) 428-7758

FAX: (360) 424-6172

Crop Acreage Reporting

The deadline for reporting all planted crops is June 30, 2008. Reporting is mandatory for all Non-insured Assistance Program (NAP) participants, as well as for all Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) participants. Reporting is also required for those producers with crop insurance. Not reporting planted acreage may result in reduced or zero NAP assistance, and will result in a non-compliance situation for CREP. Since the 2008 Farm Bill still has not been passed, there is some uncertainty as to what programs it may contain. Reporting your planted acreage is simply a good idea for history purposes and to ensure eligibility for any future programs.

Skagit-Island-San Juan Area Committee:

Kris Hansen, Chairperson
Wilbur Bishop, Vice-Chairperson
M. R. Buffman, Member
Todd Gordon, Member
Mark Wesen, Member

Committee Meeting Date:

Thursday of the 3rd full week of the month

Office Staff:

Sandra Starbuck,
County Executive Director
June Freet, Program Technician
Marlene Garber, Program Technician

Mark Turner, Farm Loan Manager,
FSA Lynden, WA (360) 354-5658

Prevented Planting

Prevented Planting is the inability, due to disaster conditions, to plant the intended acreage with proper equipment during the established planting period for the crop and type. If you have experienced this problem it is important that you report the acreage which you were prevented from planting. To report Prevented Planting acreage, you must file an acreage report (FSA-578) and complete a CCC-576, Notice of Loss and Application for Payment form, part B, for NAP. This must be done within 15 days of the final plant date for the crop. Call our office for more information.

Farm Operating and Farm Ownership Loans Available

Is cash flow lacking to fund your farm operation? FSA may be able to assist you with operating loans to cover your operating expenses until your crop or livestock is sold later in the year. Perhaps you know a 4H or FFA member that would like to raise a

project animal to be sold at the fair. Contact FSA regarding our Farm Operating or Rural Youth Loan programs.

Looking to purchase a farm or expand your existing operation? Contact FSA to see how a Farm Ownership Loan may help you achieve your objectives. Call the Farm Loan division located in the Whatcom County FSA Office at (360) 354-5658.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is part of FSA's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). The Washington CREP provides incentives to restore and improve salmon and steelhead habitat on private land. It is a Federal-State partnership, based on an Agreement signed by Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman and Washington Governor Gary Locke on October 19, 1998.

CREP is a voluntary program to establish forested buffers along streams where riparian habitat is a significant limiting factor for salmonids. In addition to providing habitat, the buffers improve water quality and increase stream stability.

Land enrolled in CREP is removed from production and grazing, under 10-15 year contracts. In return landowners receive annual rental, maintenance and cost share payments. It is also important to note that CREP participation does not require any easements to be filed.



CREP recognizes site variability. Buffer widths vary based on site conditions. The buffer boundary can be moved toward or away from the stream at different locations to meet landowner needs, as long as the buffer standard requirements are met. Producers can enroll all or a portion of the eligible streams on their land. They can enroll one or both sides of the stream.

Eligible land is defined as marginal pastureland along streams, capable of functioning as a riparian buffer. There is no minimum or maximum acreage to enroll. However, the minimum buffer width is 35 feet, and the maximum width is 180 feet. Producers sign up at the FSA office and then work with their local Conservation District offices in preparing a Conservation Plan for the site. The plan outlines the specific measures that will be completed on the CREP acres, and provide cost estimates, as well as cost-share estimates. Cost-share is available through FSA and the State, up to 100% of the eligible costs in establishing the riparian buffer zone.

Annual rental payments are based on the FSA established rental rate for the soils in the offered acreage, and generally range from approximately \$140/ac. to \$390/ac. including incentives. The annual rental payments are made after October 1st of each year. Cost-share payments are made after the various practices are installed. In addition, Signing Incentive Payments are paid after the CREP contract is initially approved by the Skagit-Island-San Juan Area FSA Committee.

CREP is an excellent program which continues to provide many Conservation benefits and solutions for our area. If you haven't investigated the program recently, and think you may have land that qualifies, be sure to come in and check it out.

NRCS Announces July 15 Cutoff Date for EQIP

July 15 is the application contract ranking cut-off date for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP.) Producers can apply for this program at any time but to be considered for 2009 fiscal year funding, applications must be complete by July 15.

EQIP is a voluntary cost-share program that assists producers with conservation practices. The program focuses on such things as improving irrigation efficiency, managing nutrient run-off, animal waste control, controlling erosion, and improving native plant communities. The program also funds forestry cost-share assistance such as pre-commercial thinnings, stand release and other Agro-forestry practices.

Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact their local NRCS office as soon as possible to ensure eligibility and to begin the application process.

2005-2007 Crop Disaster Program

Applications are still being accepted for the 2005 to 2007 Crop Disaster Program (CDP). Quality Loss provisions are expected to be implemented in the future, and a sign up for that part of the program has yet to be announced. The Crop Disaster Program provides payments to producers who suffered approved yield losses of more than 35%. Only those producers who purchased Federal Crop Insurance or Non-Insured Assistance Program coverage are eligible to apply for CDP benefits. If you believe you have suffered a loss, please contact our office for more information about applying for CDP.

Farm Labor Housing Workshop

USDA Rural Development will be hosting a workshop on Thursday, July 17, 2008 from 10:00 am till 12:00 pm. The purpose of the workshop is to provide information about all aspects of the Farm Labor Housing programs. Farm Labor Housing Loans and Grants enable farmers, public or private nonprofit organizations, and units of State and local governments to buy, build, or repair farm labor housing in either dormitory or multifamily apartment style.

Teenage Youth Farm Machinery Safety Workshop

According to the U.S. Ag census approximately 300 children in the United States are killed each year in farm accidents. Many of these accidents can be prevented if youth receive adequate safety education.

Safety workshops will be held on Wednesday and Thursday evenings (May 21st – June 12; 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.) teaching teenage youth how to operate farm equipment safely. On Saturday, June 14th, there will be an all-day farm implement driving practicum for the final certification process. Teenage youth in all counties are eligible to attend the training, however certification will only be granted to those students who pass the written and driving exams and are above 14 years of age.

Federal law requires those driving tractors for hire to be at least 16 years old. An age-exception is allowed if they are 14 or 15 years old and have completed a safety course like this one, or if a student is enrolled as a vocational agriculture student.

The certification training is coordinated and sponsored by WSU Skagit County Extension, WSU Extension Livestock Advisors, and Brim Tractor. The week-night classes will be from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. on Wednesday and Thursday night at WSU NWREC located at 16650 Hwy 535 in West Mount Vernon. For those completing the night classes, the Saturday practicum and certification will be held at Barnett Implement Co., 4220 S. Old Highway 99 in Mount Vernon, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on June 14th. Lunch will be provided by the WSU Livestock Advisors.

The cost of the certified training is \$40 and it will be refunded to participants with proper behavior, perfect attendance, and completion of the course. Scholarships are available. Pre-registration is required by May 19th. Spaces is limited, so register early or call to see if there is space available. To learn more feel free to contact WSU Skagit County Extension at 428-4270 ext 225 /email donaldrm@co.skagit.wa.us.