

Skagit-Island-San Juan County Farm Service Agency

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

Crop Acreage Reporting Deadline Extended

The deadline for reporting all planted crops has been extended until **August 15, 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 participants in the DCP program. See article below for more details on 2008 DCP. For NAP participants, this is the only deadline which was extended – all other deadlines, including reporting production and ending planting dates are statutory and remain. Not reporting planted acreage may result in reduced or zero NAP assistance, ineligibility for DCP, and will result in a non-compliance situation for CREP. If you have not reported, please call the office as soon as possible to schedule your appointment.

Skagit-Island-San Juan Area Committee:

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

Committee Meeting Date:

Tuesday of the 3rd full week of the month

Office Staff:

Sandra Starbuck,
County Executive Director
June Freet, Program Technician

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



2008 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP)

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Act) was enacted into law on May 22, 2008. The 2008 Act provides for continuing DCP for 2008 through 2012. The signup period for 2008 DCP began on June 25, 2008, and will end on September 30, 2008. Our office will be mailing DCP contracts to those producers who have applicable DCP bases. We have enclosed a detailed letter with the contracts. Upon receiving your DCP contract, please review it carefully for any information that should be updated or changed, and follow the instructions that will be in the enclosed letter. It is also required that you file an acreage report for 2008 in order to participate in this program. As reported above, acreage reporting has been extended until August 15.

Farms with 10.0 acres or less total base are not eligible to receive DCP payments, unless all of the owners on that farm are members of a socially disadvantaged group, or are limited resource

producers. Therefore, in mailing out the DCP contracts, we have not mailed any to farms with 10.0 acres or less base. We have, however, mailed a letter to operators of those farms outlining the provisions and steps that must be taken, should the owners of the farm qualify.

Nominees Sought for FSA Committee Elections

Nominating petitions for the upcoming FSA Committee elections are being accepted until August 1, 2008. The elections are being held in Local Administrative Area (LAA) 2 and LAA5. LAA2 includes all the area South of Hwy 20 and West of I-5 in Skagit County. LAA5 encompasses all of Island County. Nominations from minority, female, and producers from under-represented groups are encouraged. To hold office as a county committee member, a person must meet the basic eligibility requirements described below:

- Actively participate in the operation of a farm or ranch.
- Be eligible to vote in a county committee election. (Be of legal voting age and have an interest in a farm or ranch; not of legal voting age but supervises and conducts farming operations on an entire farm; participates in any FSA program.)
- Reside in the LAA in which the person is a candidate.

A petition form signed by the nominee is needed to nominate a farmer-candidate. The petition includes a certification that the candidate agrees to serve if elected. The deadline to file a nominating petition is August 1, 2008, and elections will be held in December.



2008 Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP) “Buy-in”

In order to be eligible for disaster benefits, legislation has mandated that you obtain either Crop Insurance or NAP coverage. For 2008 only, producers who did not obtain either NAP coverage or Catastrophic Crop insurance on all of their crops by the sales closing date, are being given the ability to purchase it at this time. The cost is \$100 per crop, up to a maximum of \$300, for all crops. Taking the “buy in” option only serves to make you eligible for the upcoming 2008 supplemental disaster programs, but not for NAP or Crop insurance payments themselves. Also, under the new rules, you must have NAP or crop insurance coverage on ALL crops grown on all farms, including forage and grazing, in order to be eligible for disaster program payments on ANY crop.

FSA Office Staff Changes

Marlene Garber, Program Technician in the Mt. Vernon FSA Office, has been hired as a Farm Loan Technician at the Whatcom County FSA Office in Lynden. She will surely be greatly missed in our office, by both staff and customers alike, but we wish her luck in her new career direction.

The vacancy created by Marlene’s transfer will be advertised soon. If you or anyone you know may be interested in a career with the USDA Farm Service Agency, please watch for the announcement to come through the WA State Employment Service and look for postings in the County office, as well. You may also search www.usajobs.gov for vacancy announcements.

2005-2007 Quality Loss - Crop Disaster Program

Eligible farmers who suffered quality losses to their crops in 2005 - 2007 may now sign up for the Quality Loss portion of the Crop Disaster Program (CDP). The CDP provides benefits to farmers who suffered losses to their 2005-2007 crops from natural disasters and related conditions. Producers who incurred qualifying quantity or quality losses in 2005, 2006 or 2007 may receive benefits for only one of these years. However, producers may apply for benefits for losses to multiple crops as long as the losses occurred in the same crop year.

Only producers who obtained crop insurance coverage or coverage under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for the year of loss will be eligible for CDP benefits. Producers must have suffered quality losses of at least 25 percent to be eligible for CDP Quality Loss. The payment rate is set at 65 percent of the amount of the affected crop multiplied by 42 percent of the per-unit average market value in the year in which the loss occurred. Producers may receive assistance for both quantity and quality losses, and may not apply for quality losses without applying for CDP on quantity as well. The total quantity and quality assistance, together with any crop insurance or NAP payment received for the same crop and the value of the crop production not lost, can not exceed 95 percent of the total value of the crop absent the disaster, and the payment limitation total for this program is \$80,000.

All documentation showing quality and quantity must be provided to the FSA Office, and must be verifiable and provided in a manner which can be easily deciphered by the FSA office staff. Verifiable production records must include the quantity of production and indicate level of quality and the price. All marketing contracts for a crop must be provided for production sold under a marketing contract. Individuals or entities whose adjusted gross income exceeds \$2.5 million are ineligible for CDP benefits, unless 75 percent or more of their income is derived from agriculture. Please contact our office for details. An ending date for signup has not yet been announced.

2008 Wool, Mohair and Unshorn Lamb LDP's

Wool and mohair producers have until January 31 of the year following the year in which their wool or mohair is shorn, to request a Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP) on their shorn production. The same date applies to producers of unshorn lambs, sold for slaughter. Producers who are associated with a farm are required to file an acreage report for all their cropland acres by the acreage reporting deadline (this year, August 15th.) Additionally, you must request your LDP prior to the time you lose beneficial interest in the wool, mohair, or unshorn lamb pelts. LDP rates may vary according to the date and market conditions. Current LDP rates range from \$0.31/lb for Graded wool with greater than 18.6 Microns, down to \$0.17/lb for ungraded wool. Current LDP rate for Mohair is \$1.10/lb. Contact our office for more information, prior to selling your wool, mohair, or unshorn lambs.

Online Services

For your convenience, FSA has provided several services online. If you would like to obtain a USDA Service Center Customer ID and password, please register by going to the FSA homepage at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov> and clicking on "Online Services." USDA eAuthentication is the system used by USDA agencies to enable customers to obtain accounts that will allow them to access USDA Web applications and services via the Internet. This includes things such as submitting forms electronically, completing online services, and checking the status of your USDA records and payments. USDA will only accept eAuthentication accounts from individuals at this time – not entities. Following is a list of some of the services available online: eForms – fill out, sign and submit forms to your local FSA office online; eLDP – request your LDP online; Electronic DCP Service – choose payment options, assign crop shares, and submit contracts online; Financial inquiries – check about a particular electronic deposit, program payment, debt, or 1099G; USDA Customer Statement – allows customers to view their participation, application and payment status in various programs, information on farm loans, and conservation plan information.

Keeping Up on the Latest Farm Bill Information

FSA is implementing the 2008 Farm Bill as quickly as rules can be written and software developed. Information may be available in between newsletter distributions. To get the latest information as it becomes available, you may access the FSA website for Washington at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa>. An RSS Feed has been put on the press release pages of the state and national websites. The RSS Feed sends an automatic notification to your computer whenever a posting is made to the page with the RSS Feed. Contact the county office if you would like information on how to use an RSS Feed.

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