

**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) 848-1077

**Emergency Conservation Program Signup March 16 Through April 30**

The Skagit-Island-San Juan FSA office requested and was approved to implement the Emergency Conservation Program. The intent of the program is to assist in solving conservation problems which were caused by the storms in December of 2008, through January 16, 2009. The program pays cost-share for up to 75% of the cost of replacing destroyed fencing, debris removal, grading, leveling and shaping and reseeding pastures.

The FSA Committee determines land eligibility based on on-site inspections of damage, taking into account the type and extent of damage. For land to be eligible, the natural disaster must create new conservation problems that, if untreated, would:

- impair or endanger the land;
- materially affect the land's productive capacity;
- represent unusual damage which, except for wind erosion, is not the type likely to recur frequently in the same area; and
- be so costly to repair that Federal assistance is or will be required to return the land to productive agricultural use.

Conservation problems existing prior to the applicable disaster are ineligible for ECP assistance. If you have experienced any of the above-mentioned types of damage due to the recent storms and floods, be sure to call our office for information on this program.

**Emergency Loans Available**

FSA provides emergency loans to help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding, other natural disasters, and quarantine. Emergency Loan funds can be used to restore or replace essential property, pay production expenses for the disaster year, pay family living expenses, reorganize the farming operation, and to refinance certain debts.

Emergency Loans can be made to farmers or ranchers who own or operate land in a county declared by the President as a disaster area or designated by the Secretary of Agriculture. They must be established farmers, citizens or permanent residents, be unable to receive credit elsewhere, and have collateral and repayment ability.

Borrowers are required to keep acceptable records, operate in accordance with the farm plan they have developed with FSA officials, obtain crop insurance, and may be required to participate in financial management training. Collateral is required. Producers can borrow up to \$500,000. The term of the loan is based on the repayment ability of the applicant, not to exceed 20 years for production losses or 40 years for losses to real estate. Applications must be received within 8 months of the county's disaster designation date.

- Administrator's Physical Loss Designation N-971, declared 1/26/09. (Winter Storms that occurred 12/14/08 – 1/15/09)
- Presidential Disaster Declaration DR-1817, declared 1/30/09 (Revised 2/11/09). (Severe winter storms, landslides, mudslides and flooding which occurred 1/6 – 1/16/2009)

- Secretarial Disaster Designation S-2854, declared 2/11/09. (Drought, unusually cool weather & freeze.) Westside counties are contiguous counties and therefore eligible.

**Deadline to Purchase Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) on Spring-Planted Crops - March 16**

The application closing date for spring-planted crops is March 16, 2009. Spring planted crops include small grain forage (including wheat, barley, and oats including annual pea forage), mustard and summer planted buckwheat. All producers who have NAP coverage are reminded to certify 2008 production by June 30 of 2009. Reporting your planted acreage of 2009 crops is required for NAP participants, and the deadline for reporting 2009 crops is June 30.

**June Freet to Retire – Open House March 31, 2009**

June Freet, Program Technician, has announced her retirement effective March 31, 2009. To honor June's service to FSA and local producers, we will be holding an Open House at the FSA Office, on March 31, from 1 pm until 4 pm. You are welcome to stop by for a few snacks - and to wish her well as she starts this new chapter in her life.

**Skagit-Island-San Juan Area Committee:**

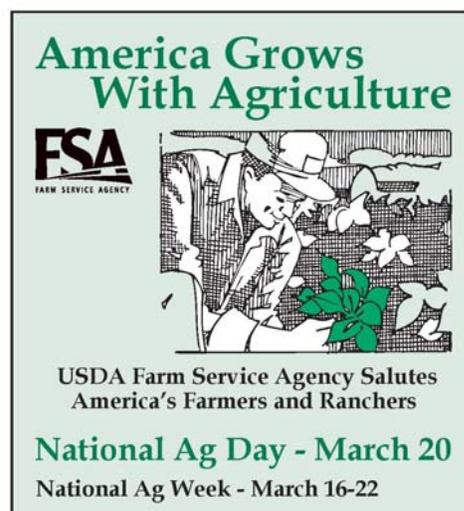
Kris Hansen, Chairperson  
Todd Gordon, Vice-Chairperson  
M. R. Buffum  
Leonard Engle  
Mark Wesen

**Committee Meeting Date:**

Tuesday of the 3<sup>rd</sup> full week of the month

**Office Staff:**

Sandra Starbuck,  
County Executive Director  
~June Freet, Program Technician  
~Susan Shackelford, Program Technician  
~Mark Turner, Farm Loan Manager,  
FSA Lynden, WA (360) 354-5658



## **Deadline Extension for SURE Requirement**

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The 2008 Farm Bill requires producers to have crop insurance or Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage to be eligible for many of the new disaster assistance programs, such as Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE). Producers who missed the deadline to purchase crop insurance or NAP coverage for 2008 and 2009 crops may have an opportunity to still meet this eligibility requirement. The recent stimulus bill signed by the President has a provision extending the deadline.

The extension is expected to provide for a buy-in waiver allowing producers to meet the eligibility requirements for the new disaster programs but not actually provide insurance or NAP coverage. We are waiting for rules related to this extension so details are unknown. However, the window of opportunity is expected to be short. **Interested producers are encouraged to contact the FSA office so that we can notify you as soon as a deadline is announced.**

Other programs that require a purchase of NAP coverage or crop insurance include the Livestock Forage Program, Tree Assistance Program and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish program.

## **Agricultural Entrepreneurship and Business Planning**

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This April, WSU in Mount Vernon will launch a new course, "Agricultural Entrepreneurship and Business Planning in Spanish", a series of free workshops designed to ignite the entrepreneurial spirit of Northwestern Washington's Latino farmers. Participants will learn through practical activities, dialogue, and real examples, how to envision, plan, finance, launch, manage, and sustain the growth of a profitable farm business.

The course encourages micro-production, cooperative business models, and direct sales through Farmer's Markets and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) groups. The series is appropriate for small farm owners who seek to increase their earnings as well as people without business experience who wish to start their own farm businesses. Women, young farmers, and students are welcome and encouraged to attend. The workshops will take place in Mount Vernon. Exact dates and location to be announced.

For more information please contact Sarita at 206-914-7948 or WSU Skagit Extension 360-428-4270 ext. 237 (press 5 for Spanish when prompted)

## **2009 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) Signup**

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Signup is in progress for 2009 DCP at this time and continues until June 1, 2009. The June 1 deadline is mandatory for all participants and late-filed applications will not be accepted. DCP provides payments to eligible producers on farms annually enrolled for the 2009 through 2012 crop years. There are two types of DCP payments - direct payments and counter-cyclical payments. Both are calculated using the base acres and payment yields already established for the farm. Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. Counter-cyclical payment rates vary depending on market prices. Counter-cyclical payments are issued only when the effective price for a commodity is below its target price.

Producers who are eligible for DCP participation will also be eligible to enroll in the new Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program. The enrollment period for the ACRE Program will begin in the spring. Producers may first enroll in the DCP Program and then later modify their enrollment to participate in the ACRE program instead. The optional ACRE Program provides a safety net based on revenue losses and acts in place of the price-based safety net of counter-cyclical payments under DCP. Details about the ACRE program will be announced at the time of sign-up and after rules for the program have been finalized. Additional information is available online at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa>.

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To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W Whitten Building, 14<sup>th</sup> and Independence Ave. SW, Washington D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.