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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

DCP Signup and Acreage Reporting

The Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) and ACRE (Average Crop Revenue Election) signup is continuing and acreage reporting was extended until **August 14, 2009**. If you received an appointment card in the mail and didn't make it to your appointment for either DCP or acreage reporting, be sure to call and reschedule.

Acreage Reporting is required for all DCP participants, as well as CREP, NAP, and other programs. Call our office at (360) 428-7758 to schedule your time to come in.

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 3rd full week of the month

Office Staff:

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

Upcoming Deadline for Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program

The application closing date to purchase coverage for the 2010 crop year for fall planted crops under the Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) is **August 31**. NAP coverage is limited to crops for which Catastrophic Coverage (CAT) is not available through an area Crop Insurance Agent.

The application fee is \$250 per crop, up to a \$750 cap per county. The maximum for multiple crops in more than one county is \$1,875 per crop year. In return, the crop has basic coverage for catastrophic loss of production or prevented planting due to natural disaster conditions.

To be eligible for NAP benefits, production loss must be attributed to adverse weather conditions. Losses must be reported to FSA within 15 days after the adverse weather event or when the loss becomes evident. You may receive a payment if all eligibility requirements have been met and the crop suffers greater than a 50% production loss for weather related damages.

Some of the basic eligibility requirements include annual reporting of crop acreages, providing actual production evidence on a yearly basis, obtaining a loss adjustor appraisal if the damaged crop will be destroyed or left unharvested.

Washington FSA State Executive Director Appointed

USDA has announced that Judith Olson will serve as Washington State Executive Director for the Farm Service Agency at the USDA. Ms. Olson's appointment began August 3, 2009, at the Washington State FSA Office in Spokane.

"Judith Olson has a solid understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing our rural communities and will help build on the Obama Administration's efforts to rebuild and revitalize rural America," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack.

Olson was the Eastern Washington Director for U.S. Senator Patty Murray and held that position since 1997. She provided guidance to the Senator on policies affecting eastern Washington in the areas of agriculture, natural resources, environment, economic development, labor and transportation. Since 1976, Olson has worked on her family farm. She is a fourth-generation farmer and has over 25 years of experience working with volunteer producer organizations and on community service activities. Olson was the first woman to be elected president of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers. She attended Washington State University and the University of Idaho.

The Importance of Reporting Crop Losses

By now, most of you who participate in the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) are aware you must report loss or damage to your crops within 15 days of the disaster occurrence or from when the loss first becomes evident. However, many of you may not realize that a loss or damage should be reported even if you do not believe you have suffered over a 50% loss, which would trigger a possible NAP payment.

Here's the reason why it is important to report any loss that you believe will reduce your overall production: We calculate your yield and update your APH (actual production history) for each year, which is why you must certify to your production for all participating NAP crops every year. If you have reported a weather-related loss and that loss was approved by the County Committee, we then have the option of substituting what is called a "Replacement" yield for a year when your actual yield falls below 65% of the "T" (County) yield for the crop, if it is higher than your actual production. The Replacement yield will be 65% of the "T" yield for that year. This can make a big difference in your average APH yield for the future. For that reason, we encourage you to report any weather-related losses within 15 days of the disaster occurrence or the time the loss becomes evident, regardless of whether or not you believe you experienced an overall 50% or greater loss.

With the recent high temperatures and drought conditions, it's especially important to remember to report any damage to your NAP-covered crops within 15 days of when it becomes evident you have a loss.

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Livestock Indemnity Program

Ranchers who lost livestock as a result of natural disasters in 2008 or 2009 have until September 14, 2009, to apply for financial relief under the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP). LIP covers death of livestock due to disasters, such as the January 2009 floods, which may have caused livestock losses in excess of normal mortality rates. Unlike the past, a disaster designation is not required. Eligible losses must have occurred on or after Jan. 1, 2008 and before October 1, 2011. Livestock must have been maintained as part of a commercial farming or ranching operation. Eligible livestock include: alpacas, beef cattle, buffalo and beefalo, dairy cattle, deer, elk emus, equine, goats, llamas, poultry, reindeer, sheep and swine. The eligibility of horses is restricted to those that are used for farm and ranch labor.

LIP payments will be based on individual producers' eligible losses due to adverse weather conditions. Payments will be 75 percent of fair market value of the livestock as determined by the Agency. As required by the 2008 Farm Bill, adjusted gross income limits apply. Program beneficiaries must not exceed \$500,000 in non-farm average adjusted gross income (AGI) for losses in 2009 and later. A total average AGI limit of \$2.5 million applies to 2008 losses.

Producers experiencing losses due to natural disasters after July 13, 2009, must report their losses 30 days after the death of the livestock to receive program payments.

Financing Conservation Projects

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) have worked together to make conservation programs more available to beginning, small, and limited resource farmers. As producers move from initial contract development into the implementation stage under NRCS' Environmental Quality Incentives Program, many face the inability to acquire the initial capital investment of their cost-share portion needed for contract implementation.

To help producers implement conservation measures, FSA has several loan programs available to assist with up-front costs. FSA makes direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans to family-size farmers and ranchers who cannot obtain commercial credit otherwise. A primary objective of FSA's farm loan programs is to assist small, beginning, and socially disadvantaged (minority and female) producers. In fact, a portion of FSA's loan funds are reserved for beginning and socially disadvantaged producers. These loan programs are not new and have been used successfully in conjunction with conservation programs throughout the United States.

For more information on conservation programs, contact the FSA office or the local NRCS office. For more information on loans, please contact the Whatcom County FSA Office at (360) 354-5658. You may also visit www.fsa.usda.gov and www.nrcs.usda.gov.

Foreign Investors 90-Day Reporting Rule

Foreign owners of U.S. Agricultural land are required by law to report land holdings, acquisitions, leases of 10 years or more, and land use changes within 90 days of these transactions. Report these changes to the local FSA office. Failure to report these changes can result in a civil penalty of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of your interest in agricultural land. Contact our office for more information.

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotapes, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W Whitten Building, 14th 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.