



Skagit Island-San Juan County Farm Service Agency February, 2011

2021 E College Way Ste 212
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
Phone (360) 428-7758
Fax (360) 848-1077
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa>

Office Hours:
8:00 am to 4:30 pm

Skagit-Island-San Juan Area Committee:

Mark Wesen, Chair
Todd Gordon, Vice Chair
M. R. Buffum
Leonard Engle
Ernesto Roque
Kris Hansen, Advisor

Committee Meeting Date:
Tuesday of the 3rd full week of the
month.

Office Staff:

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

*"The U.S. Constitution doesn't
guarantee happiness, only the
pursuit of it. You have to catch
up with it yourself."
~ Benjamin Franklin*

FSA Committee Election Results

Ballots were counted in December and Ernesto Roque was elected to the Skagit-Island-San Juan Area FSA Committee. Ernesto has farmed here since the early 80's, arriving from the Philippines. He has experience raising beef and other livestock, feeds and crops. Mr. Roque is an engineer by profession and involved in various undertakings, civic and otherwise in the US and westward.

Your participation in the Committee election process is much appreciated! In the coming year, elections will be held in two areas, including Island County and Southwestern Skagit. If you are interested in serving on the Committee and have any questions, please give us a call.

2011 NAP Deadline Approaches – Spring Crops

The deadline to purchase NAP coverage for spring-planted crops is **March 15, 2011**. NAP covers crops which are not insurable under Crop Insurance. Spring planted crops also include small grain forages (including wheat, barley, and oats including annual pea forage), mustard and summer planted buckwheat; this also includes sweet corn, which is covered under NAP and not an insurable crop. There are no provisions which allow us to accept any late applications for coverage, so be sure to purchase your coverage by the deadline for the crop.



Changes in Notice of Loss procedure

The National Office has issued a clarification with regards to filing a Notice of Loss on any crops. The clarification states that, during the growing season, any time there is a weather condition that you believe could adversely affect your crop, you need to file a notice of loss. You should file a notice of loss for EACH weather related condition as applicable throughout the growing season for that crop. The additional clarification states that a Notice of Loss must be filed by the EARLIER of the following:

- * 15 calendar days after the damaging weather or disaster occurrence or date damage to the specific crop acreage is apparent to the producer for low yield claims;
- * 15 calendar days after the normal harvest date.

2009 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE)

Signup for the 2009 SURE program runs through July 29, 2011. Eligibility for SURE hinges in part on the producer having purchased 2009 crop insurance for all insurable crops of economic significance on the farm, and NAP coverage for any un-insurable crops. The term "farm" means all land the producer has an interest in, in all States and Counties. SURE is available to eligible producers on:

- Farms in counties with Secretarial disaster declarations, including contiguous counties that have incurred crop production or quality losses, or both, and includes all crops grown by a producer nationwide, except grazed crops. Skagit County meets this criteria for 2009, due to being contiguous to a primary disaster county.
- Any farm in which, for the crop year, the actual production on the farm because of disaster-related conditions is 50 percent or less than normal production. Island and San Juan Counties meet this definition for 2009.

View and Track your FSA Participation Online

USDA offers an online customer statement that shows a summary of the following:

- FSA payments
- Farm Loan Program (Direct Loan Status)
- USDA Service Center Farm Records
- NRCS payment activity
- Conservation Program Contract Summary

In order to obtain online access that allows you to view your customer statement, from your internet browser go to the eAuthentication site at: <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/eauthCreateAccount.html> Follow the steps described to request a Level 2 account by filling out the online registration form, creating a User ID and password and visiting the FSA office where a Local Registration Authority will help you finalize your request.

Dates and Deadlines

Monday, February 21 – President's Day – Office Closed
Tuesday, March 15 – final date to purchase NAP coverage on spring-planted crops
Wednesday, June 1 – End of signup for the Direct and Counter-cyclical (DCP) program
Thursday, June 30 – Acreage reporting deadline
Thursday, June 30 – final date to bring in 2010 production for NAP-covered crops

Payment Limitation and Eligibility – Annual Notice

Producers participating in certain FSA programs are subject to limitations on the total annual payments that can be received. Under the 2008 Farm Bill, payments are limited by direct attribution. The maximum amount persons or entities can receive per year are: Direct payments - \$40,000; Counter-Cyclical (CC)/ACRE payments - \$65,000; SURE, LFP, LIP, and ELAP - \$100,000 combined; TAP - \$100,000; NAP - \$100,000; CRP and CREP rental/incentive payments - \$50,000; GRP - \$50,000; LDP and market loan gains - unlimited. With ACRE participation, the direct payment limitation will reflect a 20% direct payment reduction. The DCP CC/ACRE payment limitation will then be increased by the direct payment reduction amount.

The following provisions apply to certain programs: actively engaged in farming, cash rent tenant, foreign person, and average adjusted gross income (AGI). No program benefits will be provided until all required forms are filed and determinations are complete. Producers determined not actively engaged in farming are ineligible for any payment which requires such a determination. All payment eligibility forms are subject to spot check through the end-of-year review process. If any changes occur that could affect the determinations, producers must timely notify the County Office by filing revised forms and applicable supporting documentation.

Conservation and Farm Loan Program

The Conservation Loan program provides funding for producers to implement conservation practices on their land. The program can be utilized for approved Natural Resource Conservation Service measures. Examples of some conservation practices are: conservation structures to enhance soil, water and related resources; establishment of forest cover for sustained yield timber management; erosion control, or shelter belts; installation of water conservation measures, waste management systems, improving permanent pasture or transitioning to sustainable or organic production.

Like other FSA loan programs, conservation loans can be direct (with a limit of \$300,000) or guaranteed (with a limit of \$1,119,000). Loans secured by property can't exceed 20 years, and those secured by chattel will have a lifespan of seven years. There are three priority areas for conservation loan funds. Socially-Disadvantaged or beginning farmer/ranchers, producers making the transition from traditional to sustainable or organic operations and conservation structures or practices for highly erodible land qualify for priority consideration. If you are interested in this program, call Mark Turner or Lynn Alderson at the FSA office in Whatcom County, 360-354-5658.

Common Acreage Reporting System (CARS)

Changes continue to occur to our automated farm record systems, and the most recent change, is the migration of our acreage reporting functions to the web. For you, the customer, changes will be transparent; you will still need to visit the office to provide information on crops planted including type and intended use, planting dates, and the producers sharing in the production of the crop. The deadline for timely filing of 2011 acreage reports is June 30, 2011.

We will be sending out acreage reporting appointments, so be sure to call and reschedule if you are unable to make your appointment when scheduled. If you finished planting and wish to come in earlier than your appointment, call us and we will gladly reschedule your appointment to an earlier date.

Farm Service Agency and Risk Management Agency (USDA-RMA) cooperate in the sharing of crop reporting data for administration of each Agency's programs. This makes it imperative that your acreage reporting through FSA and local crop insurance agent (as well as the division/interest of crops marketed) be consistent to maintain your eligibility for USDA programs including SURE, ACRE, DCP, and NAP, as well as maintaining coverage purchased through MCPI policies. Attention to detail at the time of reporting is the key to maintaining your eligibility to receive the benefits and coverage on the farm. With the connectivity of programs under the current farm bill, and restrictions to what data can be corrected "after the fact" it is more important than ever to get it right the first time. Please take the time to ask any questions you have on these issues while reporting; we are happy to take the time to help with the answers.