



NEWSLETTER



OCTOBER 2012

Spokane-Pend Oreille County FSA Office

8815 E Mission Ave., STE B
Spokane Valley, WA 99212
Phone 509-924-7350
Fax No. 509-924-7787

Office Hours

Monday – Friday
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

County Committee

Charlotte Yergens, Chair,
Regina Clausen, Vice-Chair
Larry Cordes, Member
Louise (Lou) McLam, Member
Ron Soliday, Member

Office Staff

Randy L. Primmer, CED
randy.primmer@wa.usda.gov
Lorri Anderson, PT
Betty Diedesch, PT
Kay Kjack, PT
Dave Olson, PT

Farm Loan Staff

Houston Bruck, FLM
houston.bruck@wa.usda.gov
Chris Werner, FLO
Joanne Krupke, FLT

Next COC Meeting

December 7, 2012 @ 9:00 a.m.

Dates to Remember

Nov. 12 Veterans Day Observed
(Office Closed)
Dec. 3 Final date to submit COC
Ballots to County Office
Dec 15 fall seeded small grains
Reporting deadline

FSA Web Sites

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

National- <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>

USDA- <http://www.usda.gov>

County Committee Elections

This year's election is for LAA #1. LAA #1's eastern boundary is the Idaho and Washington State line north to the Pend Oreille County line over to the Stevens County line to the Spokane River. The western line heads south following the Spokane River until it hits I-90 and turns east following I-90 to the State line. Eligible FSA voters in LAA #1 will receive their ballots in the next couple of weeks.

This year we only had one eligible candidate submit a nominating petition. **Louise (Lou) McLam** and her husband Ed farm in the Peone Prairie area where they grow wheat and hay. Lou is a former employee with FSA and would appreciate you casting your ballot for her re-election.

Supplemental Revenue Assistance Signup Announced

Signup for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance (SURE) program opened October 22, 2012, and continues through June 7, 2013. SURE covers weather related crop losses suffered during the 2011 crop year, through September 30, 2011.

Eligible producers must either have suffered a minimum 10% production loss to one or more crops of economic significance, and be located within a county declared as a primary disaster county, or contiguous disaster county, as designated by the Secretary of Agriculture; or be an individual producer with losses of 50% or greater, regardless of county designation. SURE requires applicants to have carried Federal Crop Insurance and/or Noninsured Assistance Program (NAP) coverage on all crops of economic significance as a condition of eligibility. Socially disadvantaged, beginning farmers and ranchers, and limited resource farmers may be eligible for SURE without a policy or plan of insurance, or NAP coverage. In order to apply for SURE, please contact our office to request an appointment.

USDA Announces Hispanic and Women Farmer and Rancher Claims Period Now Open

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack recently announced a claim process open to Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA between 1981 and 2000 due to denial of application for loan or loan servicing assistance. The claim period began September 24, 2012, and will continue through March 25, 2013. The voluntary claims process will make available at least \$1.33 billion for cash awards and tax relief payments, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief, to eligible claimants. There are no filing fees to participate in the program.

Information related to applying for consideration under the claim process may be obtained by calling 1-888-508-4429 or on the web at www.farmerclaims.gov. Claimants must register for a claims package (by calling the number or visiting the website) and the claims package will be mailed to claimants.

USDA will conduct an informational meeting about the USDA Hispanic and Women Farmer and Rancher Claims Process on Friday, October 26, 2012, at the Radio KDNA Northwest Communities Education Center located at 121 Sunnyside Avenue, Granger, WA. The meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. Those interested in learning more or receiving information about the claims process and claims packages are encouraged to attend meetings in your communities about the claims process and contact the website or claims telephone number. Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting should contact the Farm Service Agency at (509) 323-3000 or Federal Relay Service at 1-866-377-8642 ten days prior to the meeting.

Independent legal services companies will administer the claims process and adjudicate the claims. Although there are no filing fees to participate and a lawyer is not required to participate in the claims process, persons seeking legal advice may contact a lawyer or other legal services provided.

2013 Acreage Reporting Changes

Farm Service Agency and the Risk Management Agency have established joint acreage reporting dates; the changes will be effective beginning for the 2013 reporting year. Unfortunately, what that means is that FSA dates will now match the "earliest" acreage reporting date for insurable crops, rather than having one date for all crops in the county, which had previously been the case. The dates for Washington State for 2013 are as follows:

All fall planted wheat/small grains	12/15/2012	Fall planted canola	12/15/2012
Mint	12/15/2012	Fall planted onions	12/15/2012
Alfalfa seed	12/15/2012	Perennial fruits and grapes	01/15/2013
Spring planted crops	07/15/2013	CRP	07/15/2013
Perennial forages	07/15/2013 *	Buckwheat	08/15/2013

* Perennial forage crops covered under a Noninsured Assistance Program (NAP) policy are required to be reported not later than 15 days after the beginning of harvest of the crop; for range policies within 15 days of the beginning of the NAP grazing season; for hayed crops, within 15 days of first cutting, as established by the County Committee. Acreage reports accepted after the date(s) specified will be considered late filed, and subject to late filing provisions including a late filing fee. Due to the timing of announcing these changes, USDA has instituted a process to waive late filing fees in those instances where producers requested to file acreage timely but county office staff could not complete the request by the established deadline. In order to be considered for waiver of the late filing fee, applicants must have contacted their local FSA office requesting to file an acreage report by the applicable deadline, and have been placed on a register to accept the filing when FSA staff is available. All producers with winter wheat or other crops with a 12/15 reporting deadline are encouraged to contact our office to request an appointment, not later than December 15, 2012.

Farm Changes and Reconstitution of Farm Records

Any changes in your farm's physical makeup, such as adding or removing land, can impact your acreage base. Farm reconstitutions must be requested by August 1 to be effective for the 2013 program year. Your farm must currently be complying with program requirements as it is structured, including required signatures and acreage reporting completed.

Late Filed Acreage Reports Accepted

Did you miss the acreage reporting deadline? If so, you can still report your crop acreage by paying a fee for a late-filed acreage report. The fee is charged per farm and varies depending on the size of the farm and the distance from the county office. A number of program benefits require acreage reports to be filed in order to receive the benefits. Call our office if you think you need to request a measurement service for a late filed acreage report.

Life without a Farm Bill . . .

Portions of the farm bill do continue, although many programs offered through FSA cease to exist in their current form with the expiration of the 2008 farm bill. Here is the status on a few notable programs.

- Direct Counter-Cyclical Program and ACRE Program - Authorization ends with the 2012 year. ACRE participants are still required to provide 2012 production as a term of your ACRE contract, not later than 7/15/2013.

- Conservation Reserve Program - No continuous CRP enrollment including CREP/SAFE may be accepted until the program is reauthorized; current contracts, and activities associated with current contracts, such as cost-share requests, annual rental payments, and signup/practice incentive payments are still authorized to be issued as earned.
- Noninsured Assistance Program - NAP was authorized outside the 2008 farm bill legislation, and continues on. Applications for coverage may still be obtained through applicable sales closing dates, and indemnities on eligible claims may be paid. Adjusted Gross Income provisions are not applicable to 2013 NAP policies at present. REMINDER: the final date to purchase 2013 NAP policies for grapes and those perennial fruit crops not eligible for federal crop insurance is November 20, 2012.
- Market Assistance Loans for 2012 - Remain authorized through the end of the applicable loan availability period (1/31/2013 for wool and unshorn pelts; 3/31/13 for small grains, canola, and honey; and 5/31/13 for corn, dry peas and lentils).
- LIP/LFP/ELAP /TAP - Authorization for the Livestock Indemnity Program, Livestock Feed Program, Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program and the Tree Assistance Program ended September 30, 2011.
- Farm Service Agency Loan Programs - FSA is still accepting and processing direct operating, farm ownership, youth and emergency loans, and the loan guarantee programs between FSA and approved local lenders remain in effect. FSA is also accepting Farm Storage Facility Loan applications.

CRP Contract Requirements/Information

CRP enrollment activity in the past two signup periods saw a multitude of different stand establishment requirements meaning there is no one size fits all answer to the question "What do I need to do on my CRP contract?" There are numerous answers to this question and they depend on your particular contract and what practice you bid. The following are a few frequently asked questions to guide you.

Am I required to be seeding soon? *Your conservation plan that NRCS developed is your roadmap or directions for what you are to be doing. This plan should have been reviewed with you and you should have agreed to the actions and time lines spelled out in the plan. It is very important that you pull the plan out of your file and look at the plan for the actions that need to be taken. In general CRP participants have two growing seasons after the contracts approval to get the stand seeded. Failure to meet this deadline is considered a compliance violation. We see mainly three different situations and they are as follows:*

- 1. Newly enrolled acreage that is required to be seeded to the practice bid. These historically are seeded the first spring after contract approval. For signup 41 they should be already seeded. For signup 43 which were just approved they should be seeded in the spring of 2013.*
- 2. Renewed CRP acreage with an NRCS determined failed stand. These plans more than likely require the entire field or portions of the field to be reseeded to the bid practice. NRCS probably is allowing 1 growing season to control weeds (summer fallow) and then seed in the next planting window.*
- 3. Renewed CRP acreage with a deferred determination of stand density and diversity. These fields have part or all of the fields requiring an action to achieve stand establishment approval. These fields more than likely have grassy weeds (ventenata or cheat grass) or other weeds in otherwise acceptable stands are fairly often toadflax, St. John's wort, etc as well as annual weeds that need to be controlled prior to NRCS certifying stand establishment. These fields require chemical applications in combination with the introduction of new grass seed by no-tilling drilling to bring the stand up to stand establishment requirements. These stands are probably looking at seeding in the second growing season to allow for the control of weeds.*

As you can see there are a lot of different options or combinations of options depending on your specific CRP bid. The most important thing to remember is to look at your conservation plan and work from it for that contract. If you have questions please contact NRCS or FSA and we will assist you.

When can I start seeding? In Spokane County, NRCS recommends seeding in the spring. We historically receive enough rainfall to overwinter with ground cover and prepare the soil for spring seeding. If you feel moisture may be a problem in your area and a fall dormant seeding is your best option you should first talk with NRCS and then seed only after soil temperatures drop below 42 degrees; typically early November, after an application of nonselective herbicide for cheat grass control, if adequate moisture has occurred to germinate weed seed. Your conservation plan spells out when you should be seeding your grass stand.

What about high seed costs? It is "reported" to be very high; cost-share will cover 50% of costs up to a per acre expense of \$85 per acre on native mixtures. If you cannot obtain seed, or have significant acreage to seed and the cost of seed would provide an economic hardship, provisions allow for you to request a one year extension to complete seeding, so long as you have completed the activity within 24 months of contract approval. These requests are acted on by the County Committee on a case-by-case basis, potentially requiring establishment of a temporary cover if fallow will be maintained for an additional year.

When can I turn in my cost-share bills? We try to pay cost share after the completion of all of the required activity for seeding; this generally means your request will contain the seedbed preparation activity, the seeding operation and cost of seed on one application, once the seeding is complete. Post plant weed control cost share, and wildlife watering facilities typically come in a separate request. Please be prepared to list the seedbed preparation activities you undertook, provide invoices for any custom work, and any herbicides applied, and bring in seed tags with pertinent data on purity, germination, and seed types involved in the mixture, along with the total pounds of seed used, and in the event you did not apply all the seed, how much is left over.

What about planting food plots? Many CRP contracts call for an annually planted food plot of 1 to 5 acres; if your contract has this provision it is because YOU asked to include it, in order to enhance your EBI score, and therefore your chance of enrollment. So, the trick now is "remembering" to plant it. For the record, food plots may be planted to fall seeded small grains as soon as moisture conditions allow in the fall, or may be spring planted, not later than the final planting date for spring grains in your County. Half the food plot acreage is called for to be planted each year, with the remaining half left standing to benefit wildlife. Failure to plant a required food plot is considered a contract violation, and may be subject to assessment of penalties, including standard payment reductions, or potentially contract termination depending upon the severity/frequency of the violation. Provisions exist for establishing permanent food plots. For more information on food plots and to find out if this provision was included in your CRP contract(s), please contact our office.

Should I be controlling the weeds during the establishment period? Weed control using a chemical or a mechanical operation is spelled out in your conservation plan and is eligible for cost share assistance during stand establishment. After that period weed control is the producers' responsibility and should be performed on an as needed basis. Failure to control noxious weeds or other weeds that could harm the stand is a compliance issue. Failure to take needed actions can result in assessed penalties or contract termination. Weed control is required.

2012 ACRE Farms Production Reports Required

Operators are reminded that those farms participated in the ACRE program for 2012 are required to provide the county office a completed production report for each 2012 program crop planted. The deadline for completing this requirement is July 15, 2013.

Production reports are supplied by farm, by commodity on form FSA-658. Now is a good time to be assembling this information and completing this requirement. Failure to submit production evidence will require the termination of your 2012 contract resulting in a requirement to repay all funds disbursed for the farm.

When you are in this fall reporting your winter seeded crops by the December 15, 2012 deadline you should also talk with the staff about the production reporting requirements.

Is your e-mail Address up-to-date?

Please keep the office informed of changes to your e-mail address because this is the manner in which our office provides newsletters. If you have changes please let our office know. Also, talk to your neighbor and see if they have provided our office with their e-mail address. Your assistance is really appreciated.