



# NEWSLETTER



**February 2012**

**Stevens County  
Farm Service Agency**

232 Williams Lake Rd  
Colville, WA 99114  
Phone – 509 685-0858  
Fax – 509 684-1982

**Office Hours**

Mon. – Fri. 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

**County Committee**

Doug Falstad, Chair  
Ryan Esvelt, Vice-Chair  
Bruce Stumpf, Regular Member  
Gayla McCanna, Advisor

**Office Staff**

Martin Cunningham, CED  
Lisa VanQuekelberg, PT

**Farm Loan Manager**

Houston Bruck, Spokane

**Dates to Remember**

Direct Payments:  
February 19 - August 1

Final Date to Report Crops:  
July 15

More Information may be found  
at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa>.

**CONGRESS EXTENDS FARM BILL**

The 2008 Farm Bill was extended through September 30, 2013. Most major programs were extended including DCP/ACRE, MILC, commodity loans, and CRP. Under the Farm bill extension, all producers will have the option to choose either DCP or ACRE for 2013. Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) provisions will continue to apply. Some minor program changes have been made and rules to implement those are being developed now.

**Sign up for Direct Payments or DCP will begin February 19, 2013 and continue through August 1, 2013.**

Contracts for the MILC program will be extended through September 30, 2013.

**COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION RESULTS**

Douglas Falstad was re-elected to his third consecutive term representing farmers in the area from Blue Creek north to the Canadian line.

FSA appreciates all of the voters for taking the time to complete the election ballot. The county committee system works only because of your participation.

The committee members held their organizational meeting in January, and Doug Falstad was selected to serve as Chair. Ryan Esvelt will continue as Vice-Chair and Bruce Stumpf will continue serving as the regular member. Gayla McCanna will continue serving on the committee as an advisor.

**FARMING OPERATION CHANGES**

Producers who have bought or sold land, or added or dropped rented land from their operation must report those changes to our office as soon as possible. A copy of the deed or recorded land contract for purchased property is needed to maintain accurate records with FSA. Failure to report changes can lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties. While making record updates, be sure to update signature authorizations. Making record changes now will save time when signing up for future programs.

**SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS**

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should notify the county FSA office staff in person or by phone.

## **NEW MICROLOAN PROGRAM**

Starting in January, FSA will offer more flexible access to credit through the new microloan program. The program is an attractive loan alternative for smaller farming operations like specialty crop producers and operators of community supported agriculture (CSA).

Microloans can be used for all approved operating expenses as authorized by the FSA Operating Loan (OL) Program, including but not limited to:

- Initial start-up expenses;
- Annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents;
- Marketing and distribution expenses;
- Purchase of livestock, equipment, and other materials essential to farm operations;
- Minor farm improvements such as wells and coolers;
- Hoop houses to extend the growing season.

The application process for microloans will require less paperwork. Requirements for managerial experience and loan security have been modified to accommodate smaller farm operations, beginning farmers, and those with no farm management experience. However, applicants will need to have some farm experience. FSA will consider an applicant's small business experience as well as any experience with a self-guided apprenticeship as a means to meet the farm management requirement.

Eligible applicants may obtain a microloan for up to \$35,000. The repayment term may vary and will not exceed seven years. Annual operating loans are repaid within 12 months or when the agricultural commodities produced are sold. Interest rates are based on the regular OL rates that are in effect at the time of the microloan approval or microloan closing, whichever is less. Currently the rate is 1.25%.

## **BANK ACCOUNT CHANGES**

Current policy mandates that FSA payments be electronically transferred to your bank account. In order for timely payments to be made, producers need to notify the FSA county office when an account has been changed or if another financial institution purchases the bank where payments are sent. Payments can be delayed if the FSA office is not aware of updates to bank accounts and bank routing numbers.

## **FSA SIGNATURE POLICY**

Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office staff by either spouse.

There are exceptions to the rule. Spouses may not sign on behalf of each other for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities. Individual signatures are also required on certain Farm Loan Program and Farm Storage Facility Loan documents. For more clarification on spousal signature authority, contact your local office.

## **IRS 1099 CHANGES**

Calendar year 2012 brought changes to the way FSA reports farm program payments to the producer and to the IRS. In past years, IRS Forms 1099-G would be issued to show all program payments received from the Farm Service Agency, regardless of the amount. For calendar year 2012, producers whose total reportable payments from FSA were less than \$600 will not receive IRS Form 1099-G. Also, producers who receive payments from more than one county will only receive one Form 1099-G if the total of all payments from all counties is \$600 or more.