



WHATCOM COUNTY FSA NEWS

JUNE - JULY 2008

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National USDA Website

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National FSA Website

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

State FSA Website

<http://www.usda.gov/wa>

UPCOMING IMPORTANT DEADLINES AND DATES TO REMEMBER

June 15 – Nomination Period Opens

June 30 – Deadline to submit 2007 NAP Crop Production and Crop Reporting Deadline

July 15 – EQIP Contract ranking cut-off date

August 1 – Nomination Period Closes.

Office Closures

July 4

Employment opportunities for the USDA Farm Service Agency and Washington State FSA are listed on the FSA website.
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa>

Handicapped

Accommodations: Special accommodations will be arranged for those persons with a physical, vision, or hearing impaired disability. If special accommodations are needed, please contact our office.

COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

It's County Committee election time and this issue of the Whatcom County newsletter is your guide to the 2008 election.

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committees is important to ALL farmers and ranchers with large or small operations. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA County Committees are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Since elections only happen once a year, here is an election refresher. For election purposes, counties are divided into *local administrative areas*, or LAAs. Whatcom County is divided into three LAAs. Each year one seat is up for election to replace the committee member whose three-year term is expiring.

This year LAA 1 is up for election. LAA 1, represents western Whatcom County. LAA 1 is bounded to the North by the Canadian border, to the West by the Pacific Ocean, to the South by the Whatcom-Skagit County Line, and to the East by Guide Meridian Road and I-5 South of Guide Meridian Road junction proceeding southward to the intersection of the Whatcom-Skagit County Line.

June 15 Time For Nominations

To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign nomination form FSA-669A. This form is available at USDA Service Centers and online at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov> under News & Events/County Committee Elections.

Nomination forms for the 2008 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business on August 1, 2008.

Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in an FSA program may be nominated for candidacy for the committee. Individuals may nominate themselves or others as a candidate. Additionally, organizations representing minority and women farmers or ranchers may nominate candidates. The nominee must reside in the election LAA.

The three steps in the election process are the call for nominations, the election, and installing the new committee member.

Election Period

June 15, 2008 - Nomination period begins. Request nomination forms from the local USDA Service Center or obtain online at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov> under News & Events/County Committee Elections.

August 1, 2008 - Last day to file nomination forms at the local USDA Service Center.

November 3, 2008 - Ballots mailed to eligible voters.

December 1, 2008 - Last day to return voted ballots to the USDA Service Center.

January 1, 2009 - Newly elected committee members take office.

Who Can Vote

Agricultural producers of legal voting age can vote if they participate or cooperate in any FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm can also vote.

More information about voting eligibility requirements can be found in the FSA fact sheet titled "FSA County Committee Election - Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a County Committee Member." Producers may contact their local USDA Service Center for more information.

Uniform Guidelines

USDA issued uniform guidelines for county committee elections to help ensure that FSA County Committees fairly represent the agricultural producers of a county or multi-county jurisdiction, especially minority and women producers. Minority persons are African Americans, American Indians or Alaska Natives, Hispanics, Asians, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders. The guidelines govern the FSA County Committee election process and are designed to increase participation by minorities and women.

To read the guidelines in their entirety, visit the County Committee Elections page at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>





REPORTING CHANGES TO FARMING OPERATIONS

Producers are required to notify FSA of any changes in their farming operation or entity status throughout the year, especially ownership and leased land changes. Changes that may affect a determination include, but are not limited to, a change in the size or structure of the producer's farming operation; a change in member shares, and changes in contributions to farm inputs of capital, equipment, active personal labor, or active personal management, and any changes to bank account information. If you have questions, please review your Farm Operating Plan with us to update any other changes.

NAP PROGRAM

Producers enrolled in the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) are required to submit a "Notice of Loss" (CCC-576) within 15 days after the disaster occurrence or the date the damage is apparent to the producer for yield losses or the final planting date for prevented planting.

Reminder:

June 30, 2008 is the final date to report 2007 Crop Production for NAP.

EQIP DEADLINE

July 15 is the application contract cut-off date for the 2009 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Producers can apply for this program at any time, but if producers want to be considered for 2009 fiscal year funding, applications must be complete by July 15.

This program is a voluntary, cost share assistance program that assists conservation practices to improve irrigation efficiency, manage nutrient run-off, animal waste, control erosion, and improve native plant communities.

This earlier date has the advantages of allowing sufficient time to develop a higher quality conservation plan and allow producers more time to consider the costs and benefits of their EQIP contract before making a final commitment. Contact Alex Hall at the NRCS Office at extension 102.

ACREAGE REPORTING

August 15 is the final date to timely certify your crops. Beyond that date, fees will be assessed for late-filed acreage reporting. Crop reports continue to be required for CRP, NAP, and other applicable programs that require the reports in order to maintain eligibility.

LCP AND LIP DEADLINE

Signup for the 2005 through 2007 Livestock Compensation Program (LCP) and the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) began September 10, 2007. Whatcom County is approved for **2006** losses between April 1, 2006 through March 31, 2007 for the Livestock Compensation Program (LCP) which compensates livestock producers for non-irrigated improved and native grasses and forage sorghum feed losses and the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) which compensates producers for the physical loss (death) of livestock due to natural disasters.

The signup period for both programs will end by close of business on July 18, 2008. All interested producers must apply by this date. There are no late filed provisions.

WHATCOM COUNTY CED

As Whatcom County Executive Director (CED), I would like to give thanks for the support of the Whatcom County Committee and the ceaseless dedication of the Whatcom County employees. I have accepted the CED position for Victoria and Calhoun Counties in Southern Texas on the Gulf of Mexico. I will assume my new position in Texas on July 6, 2008. My family and I have enjoyed calling Whatcom County home. I want to thank the producers of Whatcom County and wish you all prosperity. I sincerely hope your new director will treasure this office as much as I have.

OPEN HOUSE

Whatcom County Office will be holding an open house from 1:30 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. July 31 in honor of Arlene Noteboom's retirement

Come to the office and enjoy the afternoon and wish Arlene a Bon Voyage on her retirement.