



August 2008

# WHATCOM COUNTY FSA NEWS

## Whatcom County FSA

6975 Hannegan Road  
Lynden, WA 98264-9019  
Phone: 360-354-5658  
Fax: 360-354-4678

## Office Hours

Monday – Friday  
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

## County Committee

Ed Strachila, Chair  
Debbie Smit, V-Chair  
Dan Noteboom, Member  
Satpaul Neger, Advisor

## Office Staff

Darcy Maldonado, ACED  
darcy.maldonado@  
wa.usda.gov

Betty Snell, PT  
[betty.snell@wa.usda.gov](mailto:betty.snell@wa.usda.gov)

Beatrice Cochran, PT  
[Bea.cochran@wa.usda.gov](mailto:Bea.cochran@wa.usda.gov)

## Farm Loan Staff

Mark Turner, FLM  
[mark.turner@wa.usda.gov](mailto:mark.turner@wa.usda.gov)

Arlene Noteboom, PT  
arlene.noteboom@  
wa.usda.gov

Marlene Garber, PT  
[Marlene.garber@wa.usda.gov](mailto:Marlene.garber@wa.usda.gov)

## National USDA Website

<http://www.usda.gov>

## National FSA Website

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

## State FSA Website

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

## Next COC Meeting

September 14, 2004  
9:00 AM

## DATES TO REMEMBER

August 1 – Nomination for  
COC ends

September 1 – Office Closed  
for Labor Day Observance

September 30 – NAP deadline  
for grasses and fall planted  
wheat

November 20 – NAP deadline  
for berries, apples



## Keeping Up on the Latest Farm Bill Information

FSA is implementing the 2008 Farm Bill as quickly as rules can be written and software developed to process applications. Information may be available in between newsletter distributions. To get the latest information as it becomes available, you may access the FSA website for Washington at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa>. An RSS Feed has been put on the press release pages of the state and national websites, and sends an automatic notification to your computer whenever a posting is made to the page. Contact the county office if you would like information on how to use an RSS Feed.

## DCP Signup Underway – Make an Appointment Now

Producers have until September 30, 2008 to apply for the 2008 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payment Program (DCP). Because of the shortened application period, producers should call the office for an appointment. Online DCP signup is also available.

Producers may elect to receive a 22% advance direct payment, to be issued after contract approval. Final direct payments will be issued after October 1, 2008. A fact sheet that includes direct payment rates is available at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/DCP>.

A new provision prohibits DCP payments for farms with 10 or less total base acres. The rule is waived if the farm is wholly owned by a socially disadvantaged or limited resource farmer. Multiple owners on a farm may differ as to which of the criteria they meet, but each must meet one of the criteria to qualify for payments. Farm operators need not meet these criteria. For entity owners, all members must meet one of these conditions.

For DCP, a socially disadvantaged farmer is a member of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group, without regard to their individual qualities. Limited resource qualifications are: of the last two years was your direct or indirect **Gross Farm Sales** less than or equal to \$116,800 per year, and of the last two years was your **Total Household Income** (Adjusted Gross Income) less than \$23,580.

By signing a 2008 DCP contract, you certify that adjusted gross income (AGI) provisions are met, as provided by the contract appendix. Entities and joint operations that sign a DCP contract certify AGI compliance for both the entity and for all entity or joint operation members, to the fifth level.

*Crop acreage reports must be filed before final direct payments can be issued. Timely filed 2008 reports are due August 15, 2008.*

## 2008 Farm Record Changes

Farm reconstitution requests received after May 22, 2008, for farms with 10 or less total base acres, may not be approved unless an ownership change occurred after that date. All owners and ownership shares on each farm to be combined under this exception must be identical. All other divisions or combinations for farms participating in DCP must be requested by August 1, 2008.

## How to Apply Online for DCP

Signing up online can save you time and fuel costs. If you have your online authorization, you may visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/edcp> and click “Access eDCP Service.” You can obtain the necessary USDA Level 2 eAuthentication account (authorization) by registering online at <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov> and then visiting the local USDA Service Center once to verify your identity. FSA has strict security measures to protect participants’ private information. Only authorized federal employees have access to information producers submit electronically.

## Disaster Program Changes and Deadlines

The 2008 Farm Bill created new disaster assistance programs, made others permanent, and made changes to current programs. Most importantly, **Congress tied all disaster assistance eligibility to producers obtaining a minimum CAT level of crop insurance or NAP coverage for uninsurable crops for all crops on all of a producer's farms.** Producers will be able to apply for the new disaster programs to cover 2008 crops even though application for coverage dates have passed for crop insurance and NAP. A one-time waiver allows you to purchase buy-in CAT or NAP by September 16. This will only enable you to meet the requirement for the new disaster programs and will not provide you with crop insurance or NAP coverage if you did not meet the original application deadline.

New programs include: Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE), Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), Tree Assistance Program (TAP), Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP). A fifth new disaster program, the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) is exempt from the crop insurance/NAP requirement. All programs cover losses due to natural disasters only.

SURE covers crop losses on the whole farm when the county receives a disaster designation or losses exceed 50% of the farm's total production. Payments are made on 60% of the difference between the SURE guarantee and total farm revenue. LFP provides a payment to ranchers who suffer losses due to drought or fire. TAP provides compensation to orchardists and nursery producers to replant trees and vines. ELAP addresses unique disasters not covered by any other program. LIP provides payment for loss of livestock.

There is a buy-in fee for CAT level crop insurance and NAP coverage. The **fee for 2008** is \$100 per crop with a maximum of \$300 per administrative county and a \$900 maximum for multiple counties. CAT and NAP fees are treated separately and the maximums apply separately to each type of coverage. Producers are credited for any crop insurance or NAP coverage previously paid for 2008 crops. Fees are waived for limited resource, socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers. Let the FSA staff know if you think this applies to you when signing up for the programs.

FSA is handling the signup and application for both CAT and NAP for the 2008 crop buy-in waiver. For **2009** crops, standard crop insurance and NAP fees are \$250 per crop with a maximum of \$750 per administrative county and \$1875 maximum for multiple counties. NAP deadlines for Perennial grazing crops (grass) fall planted wheat are **September 30, 2008** and Perennial crops such as berries and apples the deadline is **November 20, 2008**. Contact the office for more information.

## Judge Halts Use of Conservation Reserve Program

A federal judge has granted a temporary restraining order on the use of the CRP critical feed use. The restraining order suspends all critical use haying and grazing on CRP acreage until further notice.

In June, Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer opened most CRP lands for haying and grazing after the bird nesting season. The Secretary made the decision to provide relief from high and increasing livestock feed prices. Critical use had been approved in Washington from August 2 to November 10, 2008. This has been suspended until after a court hearing.

## Changes in Whatcom County FSA Staff

Marlene Garber has joined the Farm Loan Staff as a Program Technician. Arlene Noteboom will be retiring on July 31. Please join us for an open house on the 31<sup>st</sup> at 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. to say goodbye to Arlene and hello to Marlene.

"The U.S. 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, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."