



March 2009

WHATCOM COUNTY FSA NEWS

Whatcom County FSA

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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

David A Unruh, CED
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Farm Loan Staff

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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

March 18, 2009
9:00 AM

DATES TO REMEMBER

March 9-April 10th-ECP sign up period

March 15th – Deadline to purchase NAP Insurance for spring planted crops.

June 1- Final date for DCP enrollment

June 30- Final date for reporting planted crops acreages



2008 County Committee Election Results

We would like to express our appreciation for those who took the time and effort to vote in this year's County Committee election. We are especially thankful to the candidates who showed dedication to the FSA Committee system by agreeing to run for the Committee position in Local Administrative Area 1 (Lynden Area of Whatcom County). Ballots were counted on December 8th and the following were elected: Debra Smit, Committee Member; Larry Tjoelker, 1st Alternate; W. Wesley Kentch 2nd Alternate. County Committees serve as the local link to USDA programs, providing input to help ensure the effectiveness of national programs administered to local conditions

2009 DCP Signup Continues

The county office continues taking 2009 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) signup appointments. Signup ends June 1, 2009 and there are no provisions for a late-filing period. The signup will take a little more time than normal. New eligibility forms are being completed for all participants this year and FSA staff must review existing power-of attorney forms to ensure they are still valid for programs under the 2008 Farm Bill. The new eligibility forms include the CCC-926, Average Adjusted Gross Income Statement and the CCC-902, Farm Operating Plan for Payment Eligibility. Advance Direct Payments are issued upon written request on DCP contracts at 22%. Prior to payment the contract must be approved and the participant has completed the new eligibility forms and is determined as eligible. Please contact our office to set your appointment date.

Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)

Financial assistance is available for farmers and ranchers who have debris to remove or conservation practices to repair as a result of the January storms and floods in Whatcom County. Eligible producers may receive cost-share assistance of up to 75 percent of the cost of the approved practice, as determined by FSA county committee. **Whatcom County FSA Office will start signup on March 9, 2009 and will accept applications through April 10, 2009.** The ECP program gives producers additional resources to remove debris from farmland to restore fences, conservation structures, grade, shape, and reseed farmland damaged by a natural disaster. For a producer's land to be eligible, the disaster must create new conservation problems that, if untreated, would impair or endanger the land and affect its productive capacity. Conservation problems existing prior to the applicable disaster are ineligible for ECP assistance. More information on ECP and other disaster assistance programs is available at the local FSA office (360) 354-5658 ext 100. Those who have already contacted the county office and have applied are not required to take additional action at this time.

Milk Income Loss Contract Program (MILC)

Applications for the MILC program started in December 2008 and will continue through the program's expiration date, Sept 30, 2012. MILC payments will be issued on an operation-by-operation basis. The production limit per operation is 2.985 million pounds for each fiscal year from Oct. 1, 2008, through Aug. 31, 2012. The production limitation reverts back to the original limit of 2.4 million pounds for the period beginning September 1, 2012 and thereafter. Participating dairy operations must select the month of the fiscal year to start receiving payments for eligible production. The start month must either be the month the contract is submitted or some later month. Changes in the month may be made from year to year so long as the designation is made by the fourteenth of the month preceding the new start month. Dairy Producer's who selected February as their beginning MLIC start month should expect to receive eligible MILC payments in April.

Emergency Loan Program

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides emergency loans to help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding, other natural disasters, and quarantine. Emergency Loan funds can be used to restore or replace essential property, pay production expenses for the disaster year, pay family living expenses, reorganize the farming operation, and to refinance certain debts. Emergency Loans can be made to farmers or ranchers who own or operate land in a county declared by the President as a disaster area or designated by the Secretary of Agriculture. They must be established farmers, citizens or permanent residents, be unable to receive credit elsewhere, and have collateral and repayment ability. Borrowers are required to keep acceptable records, operate in accordance with the farm plan they have developed with FSA officials, obtain crop insurance, and may be required to participate in financial management training. Collateral is required. Producers can borrow up to \$500,000. The term of the loan is based on the repayment ability of the applicant, not to exceed 20 years for production losses or 40 years for losses to real estate. Applications must be received within 8 months of the county's disaster designation date.

- Administrator's Physical Loss Designation N-971, declared 1/26/09. (Winter Storms that occurred 12/14/08 – 1/15/09)
- Presidential Disaster Declaration DR-1817, declared 1/30/09 (Revised 2/11/09). (Severe winter storms, landslides, mudslides and flooding which occurred 1/6 – 1/16 2009)
- Secretarial Disaster Designation S-2854, declared 2/11/09. (Drought, unusually cool weather & freeze.) Westside counties are contiguous counties.

Crop Coverage Deadline

The sales closing date for Spring Planted Crops is March 16, 2009. For producers planting these uninsurable crops, NAP coverage is available at the FSA office for \$250 per crop to a maximum of \$750 for all crops in one county; or for multi-county producers, up to a maximum of \$1875 for all crops grown in all counties. For producers who plant green beans, the final sales closing date of March 16, 2009 will apply to you. Check with the county office for more details and eligible crop information.

NAP Crop Loss Reporting Requirements

Producers with NAP crops that suffered damage during the growing season are reminded to report their crop damages or potential damages after each weather event. *All reports should be filed within 15 calendar days after the disaster occurrence or date damage to the specific crop acreage is apparent for yield losses; or no later than the final planting date for prevented planting acreage.* Failure to report timely may result in the loss of program benefits. At the time of filing you will be required to file an acreage report and identify the weather related event or adverse natural occurrence that caused the damage or losses.

Foreign Investors 90 Day Reporting Rule

Foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land are required by law to report their sale of land holdings, acquisitions or leases of 10 or more years within 90 days of these transactions. Report these changes to the local FSA office. Failure to report these changes can result in a civil penalty of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of your interest in agricultural land.