



NEWSLETTER



May, 2012

Whatcom County Farm Service Agency

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Lynden, WA 98264-9019
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Office Hours

Mon. – Fri. 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

County Committee

Theresa Sygitowicz, Chairperson
Dan Noteboom, Vice-Chairperson
Larry Tjoelker, Member
Satpaul Neger, Advisor

Office Staff

Ellen Medeiros, CED
Betty Snell, PT
Darcy Maldonado, PT

Farm Loan Staff

Mark Turner, FLM
Lynn Alderson, FLO
Marlene Garber, FLT

Next COC Meeting

Thursday, May 24, 2012, @ 9:00 a.m.

Dates to Remember

- **May 28** - Office closed for federal holiday
- **June 1** - 2010 SURE loss sign up deadline
- **June 1** – 2012 DCP/ACRE sign up deadline
- **June 30** – Acreage reporting deadline

More Information may be found at:

STATE: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa>
NATIONAL: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>
USDA: <http://www.usda.gov>

WHATCOM COUNTY FSA COMMITTEE

Cheryl De Haan, newly elected member to the Whatcom County FSA Committee, resigned as of January 25, 2012, to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest because her husband, Larry De Haan, was recently re-appointed to the Washington State FSA Committee. The State Committee oversees County Committee operations.

The County Committee appreciates Cheryl's dedication and support of agriculture within our community. Larry Tjoelker, elected as alternate in the recent election, will replace Cheryl on the Whatcom County Committee and will represent producers in Local Administrative Area (LAA) 1. Larry's term is for 3 years.

PERSONNEL CHANGE - Ellen Medeiros, County Executive Director (CED)

Ellen Medeiros was hired as CED to serve the Whatcom County farming community by the FSA Committee. Ellen has worked for FSA for over 25 years holding several different positions through the years. She comes to Whatcom County from the Mount Vernon area where she has been the County Executive Director previously for Skagit-Island-San Juan Area. Ellen is excited about the opportunity to serve the Whatcom County agricultural community and work with the staff of the Whatcom County FSA Office.

2012 DCP/ACRE Sign up Deadline

2012 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) enrollment ends **June 1, 2012**. Late file provisions are available for DCP through August 1, 2012. DCP farms not already enrolled for 2012 may enroll at the same time as their acreage reporting appointment. **IMPORTANT REMINDERS:**

- All producers with a crop share interest on DCP base acres must have a share in direct and counter-cyclical payments.
- Changes on the farm before or after enrolling in DCP/ACRE must be immediately reported to the local FSA office. Examples: ownership changes, producer changes (individuals and entities, and change in crop shares arrangements).
- No changes are allowed after September 30, 2012.

2010 SURE Sign up Deadline

The deadline for producers to submit applications for **2010** crop year Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE) is **June 1, 2012**. The application and all required documentation must be on file and signed by close of business on that day. The SURE program provides benefits for crop losses due to eligible weather related disaster conditions affecting crops grown from 2008 through 2011 crop years. A farmer or rancher is eligible for the program when a disaster designation has been made for their county or when actual production is less than half of the normal established production. Producers who suffer eligible losses must have crop insurance or a Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program policy for all crops of economic significance to be eligible for SURE benefits.

Socially disadvantaged, limited resource, or beginning farmers and ranchers are exempt from the insurance linkage requirement.

A fact sheet with more detailed information is available on the FSA website. Maps of disaster designations by county are on the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/wa. For more information, contact this office.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS OWNERSHIP

Please notify the Whatcom County FSA office of all deaths, land ownership and address changes as soon as possible so your farm records can be updated timely. Updating records in a timely manner can help ensure all required participants appear on documents requiring signatures and prevent payment delays. A copy of the applicable recorded deed should be provided to complete the land ownership changes.

DIRECT DEPOSIT

Have you changed your checking account? Have you changed banks in the last year or has your bank been purchased? Please notify the Farm Service Agency of any banking changes that you have made. Remember that FSA assistance payments go to you Direct Deposit. Make sure you provide FSA with up-to-date bank records to avoid lengthy payment delays.

COMMON ACREAGE REPORTING DATES / SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS

Implementation of common acreage reporting dates is a major step by the Risk Management Agency (RMA) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) to reduce duplication of acreage reporting. Common acreage reporting dates will allow producers to report acreage to crop insurance agents or FSA, without having to report the same information twice. Also, the common reporting dates between the two agencies will help reduce USDA operating costs by allowing the sharing of similar data across participating agencies within USDA. This change does not reduce or modify the programs or services that RMA or FSA provides, but will enable most crop insurance agents and FSA office staff to collect information in a more uniform and efficient manner.

Washington producers will notice changes beginning with the **2013** crop year. Producers of insured crops are encouraged to work closely with their agents to ensure they comply with the requirements of their insurance policies with respect to timely reporting acreages. **No changes will occur to the FSA June 30 final reporting date in 2012.**

Changes will begin with the reporting of 2013 fall planted crops. Crops like winter wheat, winter barley, and fall canola will need to be reported on or before December 15, 2013. Growers of perennial crops like apples, blueberries, cherries, cranberries, apricots, peaches, nectarines, grapes, pears and plums will be required to report by January 15, 2013. All other crops must be reported by July 15, 2013. Crops which will be harvested or grazed before the established reporting date must be reported before harvest or grazing begins.

The adoption of common reporting dates will allow producers to file a complete farm acreage report with either their local FSA office or their crop insurance agent. This adoption process may take time to fully develop.

Currently local FSA offices are accepting acreage reports for planted crops. Spring-planted crops must be reported by **June 30, 2012**. Producers may lessen time spent in the FSA office during the busy summer months by providing an acreage report for fall planted crops now.

Whatcom County FSA staff will begin to take appointments for crop acreage reporting around the latter part of May. You may call in to schedule an appointment or an appointment will be scheduled for you. Notification will be sent to you for your scheduled appointment. At the time of your appointment please have accurate acreages, location and plant dates for the crops you are growing this year. If there are any farm changes, (examples: newly purchased ground, additional leased land, dropped leases, changes in entity information, changes in bank accounts, etc) please inform the county office staff so those changes can be updated. Please call the office if you have any questions.

REPORTING NAP CROP LOSSES

To be eligible for NAP benefits, production loss must be attributed to adverse weather conditions. Losses must be reported to FSA within 15 days after the adverse weather event or when the loss becomes evident. You may receive a payment if all eligibility requirements have been met and the crop suffers greater than a 50% production loss for weather related damages.

Some of the basic eligibility requirements include annual reporting of crop acreages, providing actual production evidence on a yearly basis, obtaining a loss adjustor appraisal if the damaged crop will be destroyed or left unharvested. Contact the county office if you would like more information or are interested in applying for NAP coverage. You may also purchase your 2013 NAP coverage at the same time as your crop acreage reporting appointment.

FARM LOANS

October 1st marked the beginning of fiscal year 2012 loan funding for the Farm Service Agency (FSA). FSA offers direct operating and farm ownership loan programs, as well as administering a guaranteed loan portfolio. Loans to youths ranging in age from 10 – 20 years old are also available. All applicants are required to meet certain loan eligibility criteria specific to the applicable loan program.

FSA loan funds can be used to purchase farms, livestock and equipment. They may also be used for annual operating expenses, the construction or repair of farm buildings, pay for soil and water conservation practices, and refinance operating type debt.

Direct FSA farm ownership loans used to purchase real estate will not exceed a term of 40 years and has a current interest rate of 3.50%. The maximum loan amount cannot exceed \$300,000. Applicants must have operated a farm for at least three out of the last 10 years prior to applying and meet all other loan eligibility criteria. Funding for this program is based on the availability of loan funds.

Direct operating loans will be termed 1 to 7 years and currently has an interest rate of 1.50%. Loans used for annual operating purposes will generally be termed one year. Repayment for term operating loans used to purchase machinery, equipment and breeding livestock will not exceed 7 years and will be based on the applicant's projected cash flow. Again, the maximum loan amount will not exceed \$300,000.

FSA guaranteed loans are made by conventional lending institutions and are guaranteed by FSA which will pay any loan loss not to exceed 95% of the loan amount. Guaranteed loans can be made up to \$1,214,000 and can be used for operating and real estate purposes. Individual interest rates are determined by the lending institution.

Additional information regarding the various loan programs can be obtained from our website at www.fsa.usda.gov, your local FSA office or by contacting Mark Turner at (360) 354-5658.

Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Partnership Efforts Target Local Resource Concerns

Using funds from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), NRCS will provide financial and technical assistance to producers for implementing conservation practices such as planting woody buffers, replacing culverts to remove fish barriers, and decommissioning or replacing manure storage systems along salmon-bearing streams. NRCS is seeking applications from eligible producers through **May 25, 2012**.

EQIP is a voluntary conservation program that promotes environmental quality and agricultural production as compatible goals. Financial and technical assistance is provided through individual landowner contracts to plan and implement conservation practices on agricultural land and non-industrial private forestland. Also, EQIP helps producers meet federal, state, tribal and local environmental regulations and goals.

Eligible producers include those located within the Puget Sound region who have the desire to address resource concerns on their land that directly impact fish passage, fish habitat enhancement, manure storage management, and water quality in fish-bearing habitat. The Puget Sound region includes the Puget Sound Basin, Hood Canal, the San Juan Island area, and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Owners of land in agricultural or forest production, or people engaged in livestock, agricultural or forest production on eligible land may participate in this effort.

To apply for EQIP, applicants must have a profile established in the Service Center Information System (SCIMS) accessed through USDA's Farm Services Agency (FSA) and meet EQIP eligibility requirements. NRCS is encouraging interested landowners to visit their local NRCS field office and complete an EQIP application during the sign-up period. For more information on eligibility and how to apply for EQIP, producers should visit: http://www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/app_process.html. For application assistance or for more information regarding Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Partnership funding, contact your local NRCS field office. Location information can be obtained at the NRCS Washington web site: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

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