



March 2008

## WHITMAN COUNTY FSA NEWS

### Whitman County FSA

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### Office Hours

Monday – Friday  
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

### County Committee

Greg Hall, Chair  
David Swannack, Vice-Chair  
Larry Schroetlin, Member  
Gracie Miller, Committee  
Advisor

### Office Staff

Mike Mandere, CED  
Ann Holbrook, CPT  
Fred Hendrickson, PT  
Bonnie Riebold, PT  
Kathy Carothers, PT  
Doreen Riedner, PT  
Nancy Doege, PT  
Jonelle Olson, PT  
Tracy Curtis, PT  
Candi Wilson, Student Intern

### Farm Loan Manager

Steve King  
(509) 924-7350

### Important Dates

March 31 – Final Loan  
Availability Date 2007 crop  
wheat, barley, oats, canola,  
rapeseed or flaxseed

April 1 – Beginning of CRP  
Non-disturbance period

April 16 – County Committee

### Get Your Payments Timely & Accurately

Changes in your Bank Account  
or has your Bank merged or  
changed names?

Don't Forget – Update your  
Direct Deposit Form.



### Farm Bill Update

The House and Senate approved an extension of the 2002 Act that runs until April 18, 2008. This extension does not provide for a 2008 DCP signup but does extend many of the authorities under the 2002 Act. Congress hopes to have a bill put together and to the President prior to the expiration of this latest extension. There are several contentious issues that Congress needs to resolve to arrive at an agreement on a Farm Bill. Some of the bigger items include whether the bill will fit within the Congressional Budget Office's (CBO) baseline number for Farm Bill spending or if it is going to exceed that number where the corresponding spending offsets will come from. Negotiations between the House and Senate Agricultural Committees and the Senate Finance Committee and House Ways and Means Committee have come close to a decision on a number above the baseline but jurisdictional questions over the extra funding have yet to be resolved. The differences between the House and Senate Farm Bill versions also have to be addressed such as whether there will be a permanent disaster program and whether the Counter-Cyclical payments will be changed to a revenue based calculation. In addition to the Congressional side of the equation, an agreement needs to be firmed up between the Administration and Congress as to whether or not the bill would be acceptable to the President. This includes questions about the source of any additional funding over the CBO baseline and lowering the Adjusted Gross Income provisions which are currently at \$2.5 million. Failure to gain the Administration's agreement on these or other factors could result in a Presidential veto. The President has urged Congress to pass a 1-year extension including a DCP signup for 2008 if Congress cannot get a bill done prior to April 18. We will keep you posted but at this point there is no 2008 signup and no County Loan or LDP rates for 2008 crops. Stay tuned.

### 2008 Acreage Reporting

We request that you contact our office and schedule an appointment to report your acres once you have completed your spring seeding. If you are not putting in any spring crops you can report your acres anytime. Producers are required to file acreage reports for CRP participation, NAP policies, Marketing Assistance Loans and LDP's and DCP. While we do not yet have a 2008 program or 2008 loan rates we would anticipate those things coming with a new Farm Bill or an extension and therefore it would be prudent to file your acreage report when completed with spring planting. The deadline for reporting acres is June 30, 2008.

### 2008 Farm Records Changes

Changes in leases, ownerships, or reorganizations of farm entities should be updated in our office as soon as they are known. While we do not yet have a program for 2008 your changes may impact CRP contracts, NAP policies or other items which we are currently administering. Updating your farm records as soon as possible is important and will help expedite your signup during what may prove to be a very busy signup period once a Farm Bill or extension is authorized. Getting these items done and out of the way now will help reduce the amount of time you need to spend in the office during signup.

### March 31 Deadline for 2007 Crop Loans and LDP's

Do you have any unsold 2007 crop wheat, barley, oats, canola, rapeseed or flaxseed? March 31, 2008 is the deadline for requesting CCC Marketing Assistance loans and LDP's on these commodities. Marketing Assistance loans are available on farm-stored or warehouse-stored commodities at a 9-month term. Loans taken in March will mature December 31, 2008; however, the loans can be repaid at anytime during the 9-month term. The loans are non-recourse, meaning the collateral can be forfeited to CCC at loan maturity to satisfy the loan. USDA has not yet announced 2008 crop county loan rates. These will not be available until a new Farm Bill is law or an extension of the loan and LDP programs is provided under the 2002 Act.

### Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

With interest rates dropping this might be a good opportunity to add some farm storage to your operation. The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFL) is a program where Commodity Credit Corporation provides low cost financing for producers to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities for eligible commodities. Eligible applicants may qualify for the 7-year loan program and may

### **Facility Loans (cont.)**

borrow up to \$100,000 per "person." A down payment of 15% is required and a non-refundable application fee of \$45 must be paid at the time of application. Loans may be made for purchasing and installing eligible storage facilities, permanently affixed drying or handling equipment, or remodeling existing facilities. The need for more storage capacity for your farming operation must be documented. Please contact the County Office for further information. The March FSFL interest rate is 3.125%. The interest rate is based on the month of approval and is fixed for the 7-year term of the loan.

### **Conservation Compliance**

All participants in USDA Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) programs are required to be actively applying a conservation system in place on all highly erodible land (HEL) they operate. Several areas where problems may arise in complying with a conservation system are: renting new cropland, purchasing new land, breaking out additional cropland, planting different crops and changing or removing existing conservation practices. It is important that you contact the FSA office BEFORE taking any of these actions and file a new AD-1026 Highly Erodible and Wetland certification. Also, it is very important that you contact the county office before modifying, tilling, draining, dredging, filling or leveling any wetland or drainage ditch. **Failure to obtain advance approval for any of these situations may result in loss of all USDA payments and eligibility. Please note that Conservation Compliance rules are applicable under the current extension and must be adhered to.**

### **Reminders about CRP Enhancement Work**

Whether you are doing some work on your CRP related Mid-management cost share or just doing some spring cleanup work you need to keep these things in mind. Formal permission for burning on CRP must be granted by FSA prior to the purchase of a burn permit. Burning must be completed by April 1<sup>st</sup>, no burning on CRP is permitted from April 1 – August 15.

The lawsuit settlement between FSA and the National Wildlife Federation does have an impact on cover management work in addition to the Managed Haying and Grazing restrictions. Contracts approved on or after September 26, 2006, and contracts approved before that date where Mid-management practices were first added on or after September 26, 2006, all management activities shall be conducted outside the April 1 – August 1 restricted period as agreed to in the lawsuit settlement. This includes management activities that are cost-shared under Mid-management and management activities done at the producer's expense. **Please check with us if you are unsure if your contract falls into this category.**

The primary nesting season (non-disturbance period) is April 1 – June 1. Spot spraying or mowing is permitted during this time frame but approval must be requested from FSA. This can be done by just calling the County Office. Whole field mowing cannot be done until after July 1<sup>st</sup>. The Committee requests that CRP participants make use of spot treatment provisions during the nesting season. In many instances the worst areas of a contract can be treated under spot treatment provisions and later follow up work can pickup the remaining areas of the contract after the non-disturbance period. Usually weedier areas of a contract are found in draw bottoms or swales along hillsides that meet the criteria of spot treatment.

If your stand is not yet considered "certified" by NRCS the non-disturbance period restrictions do not apply. An uncertified stand is typically a newly seeded contract in the first three years of establishment. Weed control measures on uncertified stands can be taken at the discretion of the participant. If you are unsure as to whether NRCS has "certified" your stand give us a ring and we can check for you. However, we ask that you exercise good judgment when mowing and spraying to not harm nesting birds. Please be a good steward. Evaluate your stand and take necessary actions to prevent weeds from being a problem on the stand or for surrounding cropland.

### **Livestock Program and Crop Disaster Signups Continue**

Deadlines have not yet been established for the Crop Disaster Program covering 2005, 2006, and 2007 crops that were covered by Federal Crop Insurance or an FSA NAP policy. The Livestock Compensation Program (LCP) covers pasture losses in Whitman County in either 2005 or 2007.

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