



NEWSLETTER



October 2012

Yakima County FSA

1606 Perry Street, Suite A
Yakima, WA 98902
(509) 454-5746 ext. 2
Fax (509) 454-5682

Office Hours

Monday – Friday
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

County Committee

Mark Barrett, Chair
Nadeen Boyle, Vice-Chair
Brad Bonny, Member
Steve Isaac, Advisor
Sergio Marquez, Advisor

Office Staff

Lisa Ruff, Acting CED
Maria De La Mora, PT
Jennifer DeWeese, PT
Kimberly Miller, PT

Farm Loan Staff

Lisa Ruff, FLM
Scott Smith, FLO
Crispin Garza, SCL
Sandy Christensen, FLPT

Next COC Meeting

December 7, 2012 – 9 a.m.

Dates to Remember

- October 22 – 2011 SURE sign up begins
- October 26 – Public meeting for Claim Process
- November 20 – Deadline for NAP for perennial crops
- December 3 – Deadline to return ballots

More Information may be found at:

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

COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION

The final day to vote in the Committee election is **Monday, December 3.**

The elections are being held in Local Administrative Area #1 this year. This area consists of farms located in the upper Yakima Valley (north of the Rattlesnake Ridge), minus the land situated south of Ahtanum Creek. Producers in this area will be electing a County Committee person and two alternates to serve a three-year term.

➤ **Mark Barrett** farms west of Yakima and has 30 years experience in the production of apples, apricots, cherries, grapes, nectarines, peaches, pears, and plums. Mr. Barrett is a member of the Washington State Horticultural Association and a member of the Yakima Pomology Club.

➤ **Tom Belaïre** farms near Moxee and has 9 years experience in the production of hay.

➤ **Tim Ehlers** farms in the Upper Yakima Valley (Yakima and Tieton) and has 30 years experience in the production of apples, hay and cattle.

➤ **Evaristo Silva** farms in Tieton and has 20 years experience in the production of apples, pears and cherries.

➤ **Delfina Valle** farms near Moxee and has 5 years of experience in the production of apples.

Ballots will be mailed to all eligible voters on Nov. 5, 2012. The election ballots must be returned or postmarked by Monday, December 3, 2012. In addition, voters must sign the certification on the ballot envelope for the ballot to be considered valid! Producers who did not receive a ballot and feel like they should have should contact our office.

Please take the time to vote for the candidate of your choice!

SURE PROGRAM SIGN UP FOR 2011 LOSSES

The sign-up period for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE) for crop losses in 2011 is October 22, 2012 thru June 7, 2013.

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The Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disaster that occurred starting in crop year 2008 through September 30, 2011. To be eligible for SURE payments, a producer is required to obtain crop insurance on all crops of economic significance in all counties or, if crop insurance is not available, to obtain Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for crops excluding grazed acreage.

Eligible farmers and ranchers who meet the definition of Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, or Beginning Farmer or Rancher are exempt from the risk management purchase requirement.

The following are the conditions that trigger SURE payments:

- at least one crop of economic significance must suffer a 10% production loss due to an eligible disaster condition
- and the farm experiencing the loss must be in a county declared a disaster county by the Secretary of Agriculture, or in contiguous counties. In the absence of a Secretarial Disaster Designation, those who show proof of an individual loss of at least 50% are eligible to receive SURE payments for production losses or crop quality losses.

Losses are measured with consideration to the whole farm revenue, which includes crop insurance indemnities and commodity program payments, so that producers are not paid more than once for the same loss.

Producers who feel that they have a qualifying 2011 crop loss, and who have not already reported their loss to FSA, should contact our office.

NAP APPLICATION DEADLINES

Producers may now purchase catastrophic crop loss coverage under *Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)*. Although some application deadlines have passed, there is still time to sign up for perennial crops as follows:

- August 31 - Canola and rapeseed; radishes, carrots, and cabbage; value loss crops; artichokes and any fall planted crops not listed below
- September 30 - Perennial grazing crops; perennial forage crops; forage seed crops; and garlic
- November 20 - All perennial crops not listed in the September 30 category, (including berries, tree fruits, grapes & asparagus), honey and hops

The cost of the coverage is \$250 per crop, not to exceed \$750 per producer, per County. Producers interested in this program should call our office.

Remember, all current disaster assistance eligibility, except for LIP, is subject to producers obtaining at least a CAT level of crop insurance, or NAP coverage for uninsurable crops, for all crops on all farms.

2012 DCP FINAL PAYMENTS

DCP payments for 2012 will be issued after Oct. 1, 2012. These payments will be deposited directly into participating producers' bank accounts.

If there are any unearned payments, Commodity Credit Corporation will automatically subtract those amounts from the October Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program payments.

USDA ANNOUNCES HISPANIC AND WOMEN FARMER AND RANCHER CLAIMS PERIOD NOW OPEN

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has announced that Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA in past decades can file claims between September 24, 2012 and March 25, 2013.

The process offers a voluntary alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or female farmer and rancher who can prove that USDA denied their applications for loan or loan servicing assistance for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000.

As announced in February 2011, the voluntary claims process will make available at least \$1.33 billion for cash awards and tax relief payments, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief, to eligible Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers. There are no filing fees to participate in the program.

The Department will continue reaching out to potential Hispanic and female claimants, around the country to get the word out to individuals who may be eligible for this program so they have the opportunity to participate.

Call center representatives can be reached at 1-888-508-4429. Claimants must register for a claims package (by calling the number or visiting the website) and the claims package will be mailed to claimants. All those interested in learning more or receiving information about the claims process and claims packages are encouraged to attend meetings in your communities about the claims process and contact the website or claims telephone number.

Website: www.farmerclaims.gov

Phone: 1-888-508-4429

Claims Period: September 24, 2012 - March 25, 2013.

Independent legal services companies will administer the claims process and adjudicate the claims. Although there are no filing fees to participate and a lawyer is not required to participate in the claims process, persons seeking legal advice may contact a lawyer or other legal services provider.

2013 REPORTING OF FALL SEEDED CROPS

All producers are reminded that the acreage reporting date for fall seeded crops has changed, beginning with the crop planted for 2013 harvest. The new acreage reporting date for fall seeded crops is December 15, 2012 and most fruit crops is January 15, 2013. This change applies to all fall seeded crops including winter wheat and perennial fruit crops. Please call for an appointment to certify your crops now.

IRS 1099 CHANGES

Calendar year 2012 has brought changes to the way FSA reports farm program payments to the producer and to the IRS.

In past years, IRS Forms 1099-G would be issued to show all program payments received from the Farm Service Agency, regardless of the amount.

Starting with calendar year 2012, producers whose total reportable payments from FSA are less than \$600 will not receive IRS Form 1099-G. Also, producers who receive payments from more than one county will only receive one Form 1099-G if the total of all payments from all counties is \$600 or more.

The same changes will apply to producers and vendors who normally receive IRS Form 1099-MISC from FSA.

2008 FARM BILL EXPIRATION – WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU?

Many programs and policies of the Farm Service Agency were authorized under the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) through Sep. 30, 2012. As of Oct. 1, 2012, the authority or funding provided under the 2008 Farm Bill for USDA to operate a number of these programs expired, and the authority and funding for additional programs will expire in the coming months. The latest information about FSA programs common in Washington state is listed below. If Congress extends all, or a portion of, the current farm bill or passes a new farm bill, the information may change.

BCAP – Authorization for the Biomass Crop Assistance Program expired with the 2008 Farm Bill.

CRP – FSA will continue to pay all Conservation Reserve Program SIP, PIP, annual rental, and cost-share payments for contracts approved before October 1, 2012. FSA will not hold a general CRP signup until and unless the program is re-authorized and funded. Along with the 2008 Farm Bill, authorization and funding lapsed for Continuous CRP, CREP and SAFE. Farms with CRP contracts that required a reduction in base acres when CRP was approved may restore the base acres if CRP expired, was voluntarily terminated, or early released **after** September 30, 2008, and **before** October 1, 2012.

DCP/ACRE - FSA is making Direct and Cyclical Payment and Average Crop Revenue Election program payments for 2012 crops. No legislation has been enacted to reauthorize or extend DCP or ACRE. FSA may still be required to maintain the number of base acres and yields on each farm and tract, based on legislation enacted at a later date.

ECP – Authorization continues for the Emergency Conservation Program. In counties approved for the program, FSA is taking applications. Payments will be made if, and when, funding becomes available.

LIP/LFP/ELAP – Authorization for the Livestock Indemnity Program, Livestock Feed Program and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program ended as of Sept. 30, 2011.

Loans - FSA is still accepting and processing direct operating, farm ownership, youth and emergency loans. FSA is also accepting Farm Storage Facility Loan applications.

MILC – The Milk Income Loss Contract Program ended with the 2008 Farm Bill on Sept. 30, 2012. FSA will make MILC payments for September production in November, if milk prices adjusted for feed prices trigger a MILC payment. To obtain MILC benefits for all previous months for which a MILC payment rate was in effect, you must provide final production evidence and any supporting documentation, if not already submitted, for eligible months by **November 1, 2012**.

NAP – The Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program is still in effect. As of October 1, 2012, and until further notice, 2013 NAP benefits are not subject to compliance with average Adjusted Gross Income limitations.

SURE – Signup for the SURE Program for 2011 crop losses will begin October 22, 2012, and will end June 7, 2013. SURE was not authorized for 2012 crop losses.

TAP – Authorization for the Tree Assistance Program ended Sept. 30, 2011.

You are encouraged to still report acres and production to FSA. Maintaining current and accurate farm records benefit you for current program participation and possible future program participation.

LOANS AVAILABLE

FSA has direct and guaranteed loan programs available for family-sized farm businesses. FSA's loan programs are designed to help farmers who are temporarily unable to obtain private, commercial credit.

The loan limits for direct operating and farm ownership loans are \$300,000 each. The loan limit for guaranteed operating and farm ownership loans is a combined total of \$1,302,000. Funding is allocated for these programs after October 1 of each year.

Depending on the type of loan, funds can be used to purchase farms, livestock, and equipment, operate the farm, build or repair farm buildings, pay for water development for conservation practices and in some cases refinance debts. For additional information contact our office.

FARM STORAGE FACILITY LOAN PROGRAM

The Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program allows producers of eligible commodities to obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities.

The new maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL is \$500,000. Participants are now required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with CCC providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent drying and handling equipment. New loan terms of 7, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan. Interest rates for each term rate may be different and are based on the rate which CCC borrows from the U.S. Treasury Department.

Payments are available in the form of a partial disbursement and the remaining final disbursement. The partial disbursement will be available after a portion of the construction has been completed. The final fund disbursement will be made when all construction is completed. The maximum amount of the partial disbursement will be 50 percent of the projected and approved total loan amount.

Applications for FSFL must be submitted to the FSA county office that maintains the farm's records. An FSFL must be approved before any site preparation or construction can begin.

The following commodities are eligible for farm storage facility loans:

- Corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley or minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain
- Corn, grain sorghum, wheat, oats or barley harvested as other-than-whole grain
- Pulse crops - lentils, small chickpeas and dry peas
- Hay
- Renewable biomass
- Fruits (including nuts) and vegetables - cold storage facilities.

For more information about FSFL visit your FSA county office or www.fsa.usda.gov

CROP MARKETING TOOLS AVAILABLE

FSA offers 9 month marketing assistance loans, using the harvested commodity as collateral. Obtaining a loan enables a producer to extend their marketing season by allowing them to hold the commodity beyond harvest when prices are usually lowest. Producers must maintain beneficial interest in the commodity for the entire length of the loan. The commodity may be stored on the farm or in CCC licensed warehouses. Producers who use farm-storage must provide safe storage of the crop and are responsible for maintaining quality of the grain through loan maturity. The structure must allow for safe inspection, measurement, and sampling of the commodity. FSA will disburse a commodity loan after receiving acceptable documentation from the producer. Documentation must show that all in-handling charges have been provided for or paid.

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Producers who obtain a marketing assistance loan agree to loan provisions. Violating provisions of a marketing assistance loan may trigger administrative actions, such as assessing liquidated damages, calling the loan and denial of future farm-stored loans. The most common violations are removing or disposing of a commodity being used as loan collateral without prior authorization and providing an incorrect quantity of the available loan commodity.

Producers may choose a Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs) in lieu of a loan. The LDP payment amount is determined by comparing the posted county price (PCP) for a commodity to the county loan rate for that commodity in the county. If the PCP is less than the county loan rate, the producer may file for a payment of the difference between the two prices on the date of application, or the date beneficial interest is lost. Producers must have beneficial interest when applying for an LDP.

The following crops are eligible for commodity loans or LDPs: barley, oats, wheat, corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, canola, crambe, flaxseed, mustard seed, rapeseed, safflower seed, sesame seed, sunflower seed, dry peas, lentils and large and small chickpeas. Honey and wool are also eligible. Unshorn pelts are eligible for LDP only. Mohair is no longer eligible for marketing assistance loan or LDP.

Final availability date for loans and LDP's are January 31 for wool and unshorn pelts; March 31 for barley, canola, crambe, flaxseed, honey, oats, rapeseed, wheat and sesame seed; May 31 for corn, dry peas, lentils, mustard seed, safflower seed, chickpeas, soybeans and sunflower seeds.

USDA TO HOST PUBLIC MEETING FOR HISPANIC AND WOMEN FARMERS AND RANCHERS WHO CLAIM PAST DISCRIMINATION

The U.S. Department of Agriculture will conduct an informational meeting about the USDA Hispanic and Women Farmer and Rancher Claims Process in Granger, WA on Friday, October 26, 2012. The meeting will take place at the Radio KDNA Northwest Communities Education Center. It begins at 7:00 p.m.

The process offers a voluntary alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or female farmer and rancher who can prove that USDA denied their applications for loan or loan servicing assistance for discriminatory reasons between 1981 and 2000. Claims may be filed until March 25, 2013. Claimants may receive a cash payment or loan forgiveness.

"We encourage those Hispanic and women farmers or ranchers in the Yakima area who feel they may have experienced discriminatory treatment to attend the meeting to learn more about this claims process," said Judy Olson, USDA Farm Service Agency State Executive Director. "At USDA, we are dedicated to ensuring fair and equal treatment for all farmers and ranchers in our state."

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting should contact the Farm Service Agency at (509) 323-3000 or Federal Relay Service at 1-866-377-8642 ten days prior to the meeting.

Farmers and ranchers may also call national toll-free information at 1-888-508-4429 or go to www.farmerclaims.gov for more information. Claimants must register for a claims package by calling the number or visiting the website and a claims package will be mailed to claimants.

Independent legal services companies will administer the claims process and adjudicate the claims. Although there are no filing fees to participate and a lawyer is not required to participate in the claims process, persons seeking legal advice may contact a lawyer or other legal services provider. USDA staff will not be able to discuss individual claims or provide legal advice, but we can refer you to information sources to help.

La USDA Tendrá una Reunión Pública para Agricultores y Ganaderos Hispanos o Mujeres Agricultoras y Ganaderas que Dicen Haber Sido Discriminados en el Pasado

El Departamento de Agricultura de los Estados Unidos (USDA) tendrá una reunión informativa acerca del Proceso de Reclamos del USDA Sobre Agricultores y Ganaderos Hispanos o Mujeres Agricultoras y Ganaderas en Granger, WA el Viernes, 26 de Octubre. La reunión se llevará a cabo en el Centro Educativo de las Comunidades del Noroeste de Radio KDNA. Comienza a las 7:00 p.m.

El proceso ofrece una alternativa voluntaria a los litigios para cada Agricultor y Ganadero Hispano o Mujer Agricultora y Ganadera que pueda demostrar que el USDA negó su aplicación para un préstamo o servicio de asistencia para un préstamo por razones discriminatorias entre 1981 y 2000. Los reclamos pueden ser presentados hasta el 25 de Marzo del 2013. Los reclamantes podrán recibir dinero en efectivo o el perdón al préstamo.

“Nosotros alentamos a esos Agricultores y Ganaderos Hispanos o Mujeres Agricultoras y Ganaderas en el área de Yakima que sienten que pueden haber experimentado tratamiento discriminatorio para que asistan a la reunión para aprender mas sobre este proceso de reclamos,” dijo Judy Olson, Directora Ejecutiva del Estado de la Agencia de Servicios Agrícolas (FSA) del USDA. “En el USDA, nosotros estamos dedicados en asegurar el tratamiento igual y justo para todos nuestros Agricultores y Ganaderos en nuestro estado”.

Las personas con discapacidad que requieran acomodaciones para asistir o tomar parte en esta reunión deben ponerse en contacto con la Agencia de Servicios Agrícolas (FSA) al (509) 323-3000 o al Servicio Federal de Transmisión al 1-866-377-8642 diez días antes de la reunión.

Agricultores y Ganaderos pueden llamar también al número nacional de información gratuita al 1-888-508-4429 o en www.farmerclaims.gov para más información. Los reclamantes deben registrarse para solicitar un paquete de reclamos llamando al número o visitando el sitio web y un paquete de reclamos será enviado al reclamante.

Empresas independientes de servicios legales administraran el proceso de reclamo y juzgaran los reclamos. Aunque no se cobran honorarios por presentar una solicitud para participar y un abogado no es requerido para participar en el proceso del reclamo, las personas que buscan asesoramiento jurídico pueden ponerse en contacto con un abogado o un proveedor de asistencia legal. El personal del USDA no podrá hablar sobre reclamos individuales o proporcionar asesoramiento jurídico, pero podemos referirlos a fuentes de información para ayuda.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR OWNERSHIP

Please notify your local 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.

ACCESSIBILITY

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in any meeting, event or function should contact the county office. FSA is committed to making programs accessible to all customers.

FARM SAFETY

Flowing grain in a storage bin or gravity-flow wagon is like quicksand — it can kill quickly. It takes less than five seconds for a person caught in flowing grain to be trapped.

The mechanical aspect of grain handling equipment also presents a real danger. Augers, power take offs, and other moving parts can grab people or clothing.

These hazards, along with pinch points and missing shields, are dangerous enough for adults; not to mention children. It is always advisable to keep children a safe distance from operating farm equipment. Always use extra caution when backing or maneuvering farm machinery. Ensure everyone is visibly clear and accounted for before machinery is engaged.

FSA wants all farmers to have a productive crop year and that begins with putting safety first.

NEW COUNTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HIRED

Nathan Boguslawski was recently hired as the County Executive Director for Yakima and Kittitas Counties. Nathan's first day in the office will be October 29. Welcome Nathan!