



August 2010

Alaska FSA News

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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FSA State Director's Column

August is the time to sign up for two programs

August is such a busy month. You probably feel like you are using every hour of these long days to finish projects, harvest crops and get the kids ready to go back to school. I hate to add one more thing to your "to do" list, but please don't forget to file your applications for the new transportation cost reimbursement program (RTCP) and the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Sign up for both these programs begins on August 2nd. The RTCP program will make payments to all Alaskan producers for a portion of your eligible input costs, including fuel, fertilizer and equipment. It should be worth the time to fill out the application form, which you can download from our website, www.fsa.usda.gov/ak. As you consider applying for CRP contracts, remember that this year's program will be limited to 86.4 highly erodible acres in the Northern County because of the 25% cap.

We've had such a soggy June and July. I hope we get some sunshine and warm weather in August and September. I'll be travelling around the state, visiting farmers and ranchers and state fairs these next two months. Hope to see you then!
Sincerely, Danny

Northern County Producer Meeting

The Northern County Office, located at Mile 1420.5 AK Hwy Delta Junction, in the Jarvis Bldg, will be hosting a producer meeting on Thursday, September 9, 2010 from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the Cooperative Extension Service Conference Room. The State Committee and State Executive Director will be in attendance. New Farm Programs and opportunities for expiring CRP contracts will be discussed.

CRP Sign-up Opens August 2

Competitive sign-up for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) opens on August 2, 2010. From that date through August 27, 2010, producers may offer eligible land for this program. USDA is authorized to maintain CRP enrollment up to 32 million acres. Enrollment is likely to exceed the acreage limit. There are 86.4 acres available for producers to enroll in CRP, in the Northern Office. This results from the difference between 25% of the total cropland and CRP contracts that are not expiring on 9/30/2010.

Actively Engaged

FSA wants to remind producers about the rules that govern the requirements to be 'actively engaged' in farming. These rules apply to eligibility for payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) or Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program administered by FSA.

Normally the stockholder or a member of a legal entity **must make contributions of active personal labor and/or active personal management for the farming operation**. The contributions are to be performed on regular basis, must be identifiable, and separate from the contributions of others.

The exception to this rule for a stockholder or member of a legal entity only occurs if both of the following apply:

- At least half of the interest in the legal entity is held by stockholders or members who are providing active personal labor or active personal management; and
- The total direct payments received, both directly and indirectly, by the legal entity and each of the members doesn't exceed \$40,000.

E-Mail Addresses

Several operators and land owners have provided our office with their e-mail address so we can send their newsletter via the internet. If anyone would like to start receiving your newsletter via e-mail please contact your County Office.

County Committee Nominees for the Alaska 2010 Elections

Elections for County Committees will be held on December 6, 2010. FSA-668 County FSA Committee Official Ballots will be mailed to eligible producers on November 5, 2010. The following LAA seats are up for elections.

Northern County LAA 1

LAA-1 encompasses the following areas: North Slope, Northwest Arctic, Yukon-Koyukuk and Nome Census areas, as well as the Denali and Fairbanks North Star Borough.

Gretchen Kerndt resides in Fairbanks and has produced vegetables, and herbs for the farmers market and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) subscribers since 1997.

Jeff Johnson resides on Eielson Farm Road in North Pole operating a small farm raising livestock, and Dairy goats for the past 7 years.

Southern County LAA 1

LAA-1 Includes all of the following boroughs and census areas: Wade Hampton, Bethel, Dillingham, Bristol Bay, Lake and Peninsula, Aleutians East and West, Kodiak Island, Kenai Peninsula Borough South of Kasilof River.

Deb Alred, is a first generation farmer in Fritz Creek. She has been farming since 1982. Deb participates in the Grassland Reserve Program with hay and pasture land.

Bill Burton, has ranched in Kodiak since 1967. Bill raises cattle, buffalo, elk, yaks, horses and a cattleyak. He has buffalo and elk hunts and hopes to have yak hunts soon. His son, Buck and his family also help out on the ranch.

Southern County LAA 2

LAA-2 includes the Municipality of Anchorage, Valdez/Cordova Census area south of Chugach Mtns. Kenai Peninsula Borough north of Kasilof River.

Abby Ala, a 2nd generation farmer in Soldotna on land that has been in her family for over 60 years. Abby operates a greenhouse, produces vegetables as well as hay, and boards horses.

Jeff Babitt, a 1st generation farmer in Kasilof, has a gardening and livestock operation. Jeff recently built a 7,500 square foot greenhouse and works with other local producers in creating an all "Made in Alaska" product.

All candidates have agreed to serve if elected.

Electronic Services

If a producer has Internet access, program participants can access many services from home 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and receive approval and payment by direct deposit within 48 hours.

To participate in these services, you must meet all program eligibility requirements. Online services have stringent security measures to protect your private information.

To utilize electronic services requires a *USDA eAuthentication Level 2 Account*, including your e-mail on an online registration form at www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/index.html followed by a visit to the county office for identity verification. If you have questions, or would like assistance establishing your account, just contact your local USDA Service Center and talk with our trained FSA personnel.

Preventing Fraud

The FSA supports the Risk Management Agency in the prevention of fraud, waste and abuse of the Federal Crop Insurance Program. FSA assists RMA and insurance providers by monitoring crop conditions throughout the growing season. FSA will refer all suspected cases of fraud, waste and abuse directly to RMA. Producers can report suspected cases to the FSA office.

Loans for the Socially Disadvantaged

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. Loans are available for operating type loans and/or purchase or improve farms or ranches.

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, the FSA has provided priority funding for members of Socially Disadvantaged Applicants.

A socially disadvantaged applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities.

For purposes of this program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders.

If producers or their spouses believe they would qualify as socially disadvantaged, they should contact their local FSA office for details. FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

Beginning and Limited Resource Farmers

FSA assists beginning farmers and or members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's average size

Each member of an entity must meet the eligibility requirements. Loan approval is not guaranteed. Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit www.fsa.usda.gov

USDA's Spokane Risk Management Agency (RMA) Office reminds Alaska producers of the important link between Federal crop insurance and FSA's Supplemental Agricultural Disaster Assistance programs including the new SURE program.

To maintain eligibility for most Supplemental Disaster Programs producers must obtain a policy or plan of insurance of at least the catastrophic level (CAT) of insurance for the crop year 2011.

Note: the more crop insurance coverage a producer has, the more the SURE guarantee will be. For those crops that are non-insurable, coverage under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) must also be timely obtained.

Therefore, producers with fall planted commodities need to be making important crop insurance decisions for the 2011 crop year. Producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office and visit with a crop insurance agent (a list of agents is available at all USDA Service Centers) to fully understand what crop insurance programs are available in the county and to ensure they are obtaining adequate coverage for eligibility.

The next upcoming sales closing date for Federal crop insurance in Alaska is:

September 30: Forage Production

The Adjusted Gross Revenue-Lite program also meets the linkage requirements for SURE. And if there is no crop insurance coverage in a county for a specific crop, and that crop is insurable in another county under the traditional Federal crop insurance program, a producer may seek coverage by asking an agent whether they would be eligible for crop insurance coverage under a written agreement.

A 2011 Multi-Peril Crop Availability Listing by county is posted on RMA website, http://www.rma.usda.gov/aboutrma/fields/wa_rs_o/

Producers are encouraged to contact their local agent for additional details. In addition to USDA Service Centers, a listing of crop/livestock agents is also available at, <http://www3.rma.usda.gov/tools/agents>

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Recover Transportation Cost

Farmers and ranchers in Alaska can apply for the Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment Program (RTCP). Apply between August 2 and September 10, 2010 for this USDA Farm Service Agency program providing relief from the high transportation costs that Alaskan agricultural producer's experience. Contact the Alaska Farm Service Agency for information. Applications open August 2 and close September 10, 2010.

DON'T DELAY - ASK TODAY. www.fsa.usda.gov/ak

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 Doug Carter, 907-761-7754

Northern Service Center
 Jarvis Bldg. 1420-1/2 Alaska Hwy.
 Delta Junction, AK 99737
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Selected Interest Rates for August 2010		
Farm Operating - Direct		2.500%
Farm Ownership - Direct		4.625%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher		1.500%
Farm Storage Facility Loan	7 year	2.500%
	10 year	3.000%
	12 year	3.375%
Commodity Loans	1996-Present	1.250%

Dates to Remember	
May 17	Transition Incentive Program Signup Opened
2 August	RTCP Sign-up Opens
2 August	CRP General Sign-up Opens
27 August	CRP General Sign-up Closed
1 Sept.	NAP Deadline – 2011 Value Loss and Controlled Environment Crops
9 Sept.	Producer Meeting Northern County Office
10 Sept.	RTCP Sign-up Closed

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