

Beaverhead County Farm Service Agency News

May 2008

Farm Service Agency
420 Barrett St.
Dillon, MT 59725
(406)683-3830

COUNTY COMMITTEE

David Schuett, LAA 1	Chair
Donna Hildreth, LAA 3	Vice-Chair
Jerry Meine, LAA 2	Regular Member

OFFICE STAFF

Alan Jenne	Farm Loan Manager, Acting CED
Jenny Rose	Program Technician
Carrie Catling	Office Clerk

CONSERVATION COMPLIANCE

Federal regulations discourage the production of crops on highly erodible cropland unless the land is protected from erosion by an approved conservation system. Status reviews are conducted to ensure producers follow a conservation plan on highly erodible land. In addition to the highly erodible land, a person may not plant an agricultural commodity on wetlands converted after Dec. 23, 1985, or convert a wetland to make agricultural production possible after Nov. 28, 1990. Failure to comply with these provisions will cause a person to be ineligible for USDA benefits. County Committees may review noncompliance situations for good faith and provide relief in approved cases.

DCP FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PLANTINGS

The 2008 Farm Bill has currently not been passed. FSA cannot predict the final terms of what Congress will adapt, however, to ensure compliance with pending farm bill proposals, producers with plans of planting fruit and vegetables (FAV's) in 2008 need to be aware of planting restrictions. These restrictions were applied to base acreage during the 2002 Farm Bill. Please contact the county office for a list of FAV restricted crops. When planting FAV's, producers had the following options:

1. Plant FAV's on a participating farm's "free acres".
2. Plant FAV's on base acreage of a participating farm that has a farm FAV history and takes an acre-for-acre reduction in the DCP payment. NOTE: Farm FAV history is based on the FAV planting history for 1991-1995 or 1998-2001.
3. Plant FAV's on base acreage of a participating farm without farm FAV history, using the producer's FAV history and takes

an acre-for-acre reduction in DCP payment. NOTE: Producer FAV history is based on the planting history the producer has of each specific FAV crop.

4. Plant FAV's on a nonparticipating farm.

2008 CROP REPORTING

Map packets have been mailed out from the County office. As in the past, to qualify for certain program benefits, you are required to timely certify your crop acreage. The deadline to certify your crop report is **July 15, 2008**. Any late-filed crop reports will be assessed a late file fee at a minimum of \$46 and a field visit will be performed by the County office. It could also delay or disqualify you from receiving FSA program benefits.

If you did not receive a map packet and wish to certify your acres, please contact our office. We are taking appointments for crop certification.

2005-2007 DISASTER SIGN-UP CONTINUES

We are still in the process of taking applications for the 2005-2007 Crop Disaster Program and the 2007 Livestock Compensation Program. If you believe you had a qualifying loss for either program, please contact the office for more information.

NAP PRODUCERS

It is imperative that you timely file a notice of loss to maintain eligibility for NAP benefits. A notice of loss must be provided within 15 calendar days after the disaster occurrence or date damage to the specific crop acreage is apparent to the producer for yield losses. A 2008 certified crop report must be on file **prior** to filing a notice of loss. Please contact our office if you have any questions or concerns.

CHANGES TO YOUR FARMING OPERATION

To ensure a smooth transition when a new Farm Bill is passed, FSA is encouraging producers to notify us of any changes to your farming operation including land ownership or lease changes, entity changes including members and shares, and who is authorized to sign documents for the operation or individuals. It is anticipated there will be policy changes and new forms to complete when new programs are implemented. Details will be published in this newsletter as they are known.

The Improper Payments Information Act of 2002 (IPEA) implemented stronger internal controls and reviews of payments issued. **The FSA database of payments issued will be compared against the Social Security Administration (SSA) database of deceased individuals.** It is very important that FSA be notified of the death of a landowner, member of an entity, or anyone that may be earning USDA benefits. There are actions that can be taken to ensure payments are issued correctly and not considered an overpayment. Contact your local office for more information.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CRP CONTRACT HOLDERS

CRP contract holders have certain responsibilities for carrying out the terms and conditions of the CRP contract. Those include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ Control all weeds, insects, pests and other undesirable species to the extent necessary to ensure that the establishment and maintenance of the approved cover is adequately protected and there is no adverse impact on surrounding land.
- ✓ Establish and maintain the required vegetative or water cover and other required practices.
- ✓ No activity may be conducted on CRP acres without authorization.
- ✓ Prior approval must be received from FSA before any harvesting, grazing or other commercial use of the forage may begin.
- ✓ If land with a CRP contract is sold, the new owners should notify the local county FSA office if they want to continue the contract.

If CRP land is sold and the new owner does not wish to continue the CRP contract, the previous CRP participant will be required to repay all payments received on the contract plus interest and liquidated damages. Liquidated damages are equal to 25 percent of the annual rental payment on those acres not contracted by the new owner.

COC Election Approaching

Beginning **June 15, 2008**, nominations are being accepted for candidates for County Committee (COC) positions.

A county or area served by the COC is divided into local administrative areas (LAA). Each LAA is represented by one member on the county committee. Only one LAA holds an election each year. This year the LAA open in Beaverhead County is LAA 3 and is currently represented by Donna Hildreth of Medicine Lodge. This LAA consists of producers that are south of the dividing line between T8S and T9S.

The nominee must sign the nomination form in order to be nominated as a COC member. Nomination forms are also available at the county office or by logging on to the Montana FSA website at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt>.

Please remember that as a county committee member you are the local voice of how FSA programs are administered to meet your local community and resource needs. Nomination forms must be submitted to the FSA county office by **August 1, 2008**. Ballots will be sent to eligible voters beginning November 3, 2008. The final day for voters to submit their voted ballots is December 1, 2008.

LOAN AND LDP VIOLATIONS

Incorrect Certification is either of the following:

- ❖ Certifying a quantity in excess of the quantity eligible for loan or LDP
- ❖ Making any fraudulent representation with respect to obtaining loans or LDP's.

Unauthorized Removal is the movement of any farm-stored loan quantity from the storage structure where the commodity was stored or structures that were designated when the loan was approved to any other storage structure whether or not the structure is located on the producer's farm without prior written authorization from the COC. Unauthorized removal is considered a violation if the producer does not maintain control of the commodity or CCC loses first lien on the collateral.

Unauthorized Disposition is the conversion of any loan quantity pledged as collateral for a farm-stored loan without prior written authorization from the COC.

Consequences of Loan and LDP Violations may be:

- ❖ Assessment of liquidated damages and other administrative actions, and shall be liable for monetary amounts as specified in the applicable regulations and terms and conditions of the applicable forms.
- ❖ Criminal prosecution under Federal Law.

LOAN & LDP FINAL AVAILABILITY DATES

Loans and LDP's are available to eligible producers who have:

- ❖ Reported acreage of the crop for which a loan or LDP is requested.
- ❖ Complied with all other program provisions

Request for loans and LDP's shall be made on or before the final availability date. Following are the final availability dates for crops harvested in 2007 for eligible grains, oilseeds, pulse crops, wool & mohair and honey:

Commodity	Availability Date
Corn, Grain sorghum, Mustard seed, Safflower seed, Soybeans, Sunflower seed, Dry peas, Lentils and Small chickpeas	May 31, 2008
Wool/mohair for wool/mohair clipped in calendar year 2008	January 31, 2009

FOREIGN BUYERS NOTIFICATION

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of United States agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. FSA administers this program for USDA. Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land are required to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form (FSA-153) could result in civil penalties up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property.

County government offices, realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements. AFIDA was enacted to establish a nationwide system to monitor ownership and purchases of U.S. agricultural land by foreign persons.

NRCS NEWS.....Kyle Tackett, DC

As you may already know, Congress passed, and the President signed, another extension of current farm bill programs. This time, it was a two week extension to May 16th. The direction Congress was taking on the farm bill was criticized heavily by the President in late April. However, the two week extension is evidence that the President is willing to give the process a little more time. The main stumbling blocks right now appear to be: (1) The Administration wants support to farmers to be in the form of direct payments, while Congress

supports countercyclical payments. (2) The Administration wants to set the new AGI limit at \$200,000, down from the current \$2.5 million; while Congress is looking at a limit of \$500,000. (3) As expected, the administration wants increases over the base line for new farm bill spending scaled back some more. It appears an agreement in Congress is on the horizon, but the possibility of a veto by the President is out there.

Source: www.farmbill2007.com

BVD-PI BIOSECURITY PROJECT

As it enters its third year, the 2008 Montana BVD-PI Herd Biosecurity Project continues to help improve the health of Montana's cow herd and add value to the state's calf crop. In 2008 the project will again provide technical assistance and a screening supply "kit" to Montana ranchers who want to test their cattle for persistent infection (PI) with bovine viral diarrhea (BVD) virus. The project assists ranchers in preventing transmission of the BVD virus from PI animals to their breeding herds. The BVD virus exists in cattle worldwide – and can cause severe hardship for ranchers and cattle feeders that experience outbreaks of the disease. Research shows the annual loss in reproductive efficiency alone due to only one PI animal can range from \$14 - \$24 for every cow in the herd. The main negative health effects of BVD virus is it inhibits conception and causes abortion in susceptible female cattle. The virus suppresses the immune system, making infected animals more susceptible to other diseases. PI animals usually have a very high amount of virus circulating in their blood and they shed virus very efficiently to susceptible animals. The disease has no human health implications and meat from infected cattle is no threat to the beef consumer.

Testing for PI status is an once-in-a-lifetime event. If an animal is PI negative at birth, it will always be negative. If an animal is PI positive at birth, it will always be positive. Using this knowledge and a relatively inexpensive "pooled" diagnostic approach, testing can cost less than \$2 per head. Ranchers wanting to participate in the project must apply through Montana State University. For more information about the project, Contact Clint Peck, director of Beef Quality Assurance programs for Montana State University at 406/896-9068 cpeck@montana.edu, or Mo Harbac, 406/994-4323 mharbac@montana.edu or visit the website at www.mtbqa.org.

The project is supported by the Montana Stockgrowers Association and is funded through the Montana Beef Network.

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Dates to Remember.....

May 26th – Office Closed
June 15th – COC Nominations Open
July 4th – Office Closed
July 15th – 2008 Acreage Report Deadline
July 15th – 2007 Crop Production Due
August 1st – Final day to request farm reconstitution

Women Stepping Forward for Agriculture Symposium

Mark your calendars for the annual Women Stepping Forward for Agriculture Symposium to be held September 30 & October 1 at the Clock Tower Inn in Billings, Montana.

A great slate of topics will be discussed such as Dispelling Agriculture Myths from the American Farm Bureau, a panel discussion from the congressional staffers, source water protection and farm-to-table. Ed Usset from the Minnesota Center for Farm Financial Management will be presenting "Grain Marketing is Simple." These are just a few of the topics, presentations, and activities that will occur during the two day event. Cost of registration is \$60 which includes meals and presentations.

The symposium will begin at 8:00 a.m. on September 30 with registration and end on October 1 at 2:00 p.m.

Continue to watch the newsletter for further details.

