

NOVEMBER 2007

Benton County FSA News

Benton County FSA

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Benton County Committee

Jeff Freepons, Chair
Larry Wilkerson, Vice Chair
David Roseberry, Member
Adolfo Alvarez, Advisor
Teresa Engbertson, Advisor

COC Meetings

Meetings are scheduled for the LAST Wednesday of every month @ 9:00 AM; NO meetings are held in July

Office Staff

Dennis Simmelink, CED
dennis.simmelink@wa.usda.gov
Bonnie Anderson, PT
Teresa Johnson, PT

Jon Wilson, Farm Loan Mgr.
Pam Castoldi, FLO
Joyce Nevins-Ginsberg, FLO
Franklin County FSA Office
Phone: (509) 545-8543

Office Hours

Monday – Friday
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

Office Closures

November 12; Veterans Day
November 22; Thanksgiving
December 25; Christmas
January 1; New Year's

Dates to Remember:

December 3; Deadline to return COC ballots
December 6; COC ballots counted
ONGOING (until further notice); Disaster & Livestock program signups

We are able to provide the most efficient service when your farm records are properly updated. Help Us Help You by keeping us informed of any changes in your farming operation.



www.fsa.usda.gov
www.fsa.usda.gov/wa/

CROP DISASTER PROGRAM (CDP) SIGNUP UNDERWAY

Signup for the CDP program began October 15, 2007. Authorized under the "U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007" (2007 Act), the 2007 Act provides approximately \$3 billion in agricultural disaster aid for America's farmers and ranchers. CDP provides benefits to farmers who suffered quantity and quality losses from natural disasters and related conditions that occurred in 2005 and 2006 and for 2007 crops if the crop was planted before Feb. 28, 2007, or in the case of prevented plantings would have been planted before Feb. 28, 2007. Producers who incurred qualifying losses for one or multiple crops in 2005, 2006 or 2007 will receive benefits for the year with the greatest loss. Assignments for this program will be honored if the requests were received after May 25, 2007.

Only producers who obtained crop insurance coverage or coverage under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for the year of loss will be eligible for CDP benefits.

Producers must have suffered quantity losses in excess of 35 percent to be eligible for CDP. The payment rate is set at 42 percent of the established price. The payment quantity for quality losses will be equal to the lesser of: (1) the actual production of the crop affected by a quality loss; or (2) the quantity of expected production of the crop affected by a quality loss. The quality loss must be at least 25 percent of the value that all affected production of the crop would have had if the crop had not suffered a quality loss. Assistance, together with any crop insurance or NAP payment received for the same crop, including the value of the crop production not lost, must not exceed 95 percent of the total value of the crop absent the disaster. Farmers may receive a maximum of \$80,000 in CDP benefits. If you feel you have suffered a qualifying loss under the CDP program, please contact the office and we will set you up with an appointment. There currently is no set deadline on the CDP signup.

LIVESTOCK PROGRAM CONTINUES

Signup for the Livestock Compensation Program (LCP) and the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) continues. LCP provides benefits to livestock producers who suffered weather related feed losses or incurred additional feed costs directly resulting from approved natural disasters occurring between January 1, 2005, and February 28, 2007. **Benton County is approved for 2005 only, as that is the only year a disaster designation (drought) was received.** LIP provides assistance to livestock producers who suffered physical losses to livestock inventory directly resulting from natural disasters occurring between January 1, 2005 and February 28, 2007. Both LIP and LCP are similar to livestock programs the agency has offered in the past. No deadline for the program signups has been set. Please contact the office if you want to make an appointment to apply for LCP or LIP.

PROGRAM PAYMENTS

Payments under the CDP, LCP and LIP will be issued once FSA has completed the process of publishing the program rules in the Federal Register. We are unsure of when this will be completed but anticipate that it may not be done until after the first of the year.

We are currently processing final Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) payments and Fiscal year 2007 Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) payments. All payments should be processed and issued by the end of October. If you are expecting a program payment and have not received one by the first of November, please contact the office.

BENTON FSA COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION

This year LAA #1, which encompasses the northern portion of the county and includes all land lying north of Highway 22 and west of Highway 225 at the juncture of Benton City, is up for election. Jeff Freepons currently holds this position. The following have been nominated and agree to serve if elected to the County Committee: Jeff Freepons and Gayle Wheeler. If you are a producer in LAA #1 and do not receive a ballot, contact the Service Center. **Ballots will be mailed November 2, 2007, and must be returned by December 3, 2007. Please remember to sign your ballot return envelope and that you cannot sign a ballot using a Power-of-Attorney authority. Ballots will be counted at the county office on December 6, 2007 at 10:00 AM, and is open to the public.**

ASSIGNMENTS

Producers eligible for specified FSA program payments can choose to have them assigned directly to a 3rd party, normally a bank. This is done with a CCC-36 Assignment of Payment form. Both the producer and the 3rd party must agree to this arrangement, and it is important that both parties communicate concerning changes in the operation that may affect the payment amount each receives. Privacy laws prevent FSA from reporting any changes directly to the 3rd party without authorization from the producer.

FARM RECORD CHANGES & RECONSTITUTIONS

Changes in leases, ownerships, or reorganizations of farm entities should be updated in our office as soon as they are known. Please notify us of any changes to your records for the 2008 crop year so that these changes can be completed in the county office prior to signups. The final date to request a reconstitution of a farm or tract combination or division effective for the 2008 crop year is **August 1, 2008**. Requests that are received after August 1 will not become effective until the 2009 crop year. The more accurate that your records are recorded in our files means that we are able to more efficiently process any payments that may be due your farm. Also, please remember to date your signature on any paperwork that we process for you. Failure to do so may result in the temporary suspension of payments until we have the signatures properly dated.

SIGNATURE REQUIREMENTS

County offices must verify that a signature authority is on file in the county office before accepting a signature on any program or related documents on behalf of another. When signing in a representative capacity for a husband or wife, trust, estate, partnership, corporation, or other entity, an indicator such as "by" or "for" should precede the signature, followed by authorization, such as "trustee" or "POA".

2007 FARM BILL UPDATE

The current farm bill (Farm Security & Rural Investment Act of 2002) expired September 30, 2007. Most programs administered through FSA are authorized under the farm bill. The House of Representatives passed their version of the farm bill in July and the Senate is continuing to work on their version. However, to date there is no new farm bill or extension of the current bill, which means no 2008 Direct & Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) signup. The DCP program was authorized under the 2002 Act for crop years 2002-2007. Whether or not there is a DCP program for 2008 or similar program utilizing base acres will be determined by Congress in the farm bill debate. If there is a decision to extend the current act we will let you know. We will inform you of any signup dates and program provisions once the farm bill has been passed...stay tuned.

USE OF FSA LOAN FUNDS

If the cost-share requirement on a conservation practice is preventing you from adopting the practice or a new tractor is needed on the farm, FSA may be able to help with the financing. FSA provides low interest, long-term loans to producers who have difficulty obtaining commercial credit. Direct Farm Ownership Loans may be used to purchase land, construct buildings or other improvements, and apply soil and water conservation practices. FSA also has a Beginning Farmer Down Payment program to help purchase a farm or ranch. Producers may use Direct Operating Loans to purchase livestock, poultry, equipment, feed, seed, farm chemicals, and supplies; to apply soils and water conservation practices and to refinance indebtedness with certain limitations. When a county or contiguous county receives a disaster designation, FSA makes Direct Emergency Loans available. These loans may be used to restore or replace essential property, pay all or part of production costs associated with the disaster year, pay essential family living expenses, reorganize the farming operation or refinance indebtedness with certain limitations. FSA also makes available Guaranteed Loans through commercial lenders. Guaranteed Farm Ownership and Guaranteed Operating loans can be used for the same purposes as the corresponding Direct Loans but they may also be used to refinance debt. For more information about FSA loan programs, contact Jon Wilson at 509-545-8543 ext 102.