

F S A F a r m N e w s

Lower Columbia Area Farm Service Agency

11104 NE 149th St C-500

Brush Prairie, WA 98606

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. State FSA Website: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa>

Phone: (360) 883-1987

FAX: (360) 885-2284

2007 DCP Signup Extended

The final date for timely enrollment into the Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program has been extended until August 3, 2007. The extension has been approved nationally to assist producers who were not able to timely schedule appointments due to FSA workload issues. Contracts may be enrolled from August 4th through September 30th, 2007 under late filing provisions however late filings are subject to a late filing fee of \$100. As a reminder, if you are planning on planting any Fruits or Vegetable crops on farms enrolled in DCP, please contact our office about the implications of doing so, prior to proceeding. In most cases, you won't run into a problem but it's better to check to make sure everything is ok ahead of time.

Lower Columbia Area Committee:

Dee Bajema – Skamania Co.
George Thoeny – W. Clark/Cowlitz Co.
Fred Aegerter – Wahkiakum Co.
Gary Boldt – E. Clark Co.
Joe Shulke – Cowlitz Co.

Committee Meeting Date:

Last Thursday of the Month

Office Staff:

Sandra Starbuck,
County Executive Director
Amy Paulson, Program Technician

Mark Turner, Farm Loan Manager,
FSA Lynden, WA (360) 354-5658
Jeff Peterson, Farm Loan Officer, FSA

Crop Reporting for 2007

Acreage reporting is beginning and will continue through the final date for timely reporting, June 29th, 2007. Acreage reports are required for farms enrolled in DCP, CRP and CREP, and participation in other programs including price support LDP's, and the Noninsured Assistance Program. Acreage reports may be filed after June 29, 2007, but will be subject to a fee to cover the cost of a field visit by FSA.

A few specific items that you should be prepared with when you report your planted acreage include names of any persons who

are sharing in production of your crop(s) and their respective share(s) of the crop(s), written leases if applicable, and planting dates for all crops. Remember, if you carry crop insurance, our data and the data you report to your crop insurance agent, is required to match with respect to planted acreage, shares, and planting dates.

Washington FSA's New State Executive Director

FSA Administrator Theresa Lasseter recently announced the appointment of Jack Silzel to State Executive Director (SED) for Washington State. Prior to accepting the appointment, Jack served more than 10 years in Washington, D.C. as the agriculture policy director for former Congressman George Nethercutt, and legislative director for Congresswoman Cathy McMorris. He worked closely with House and Senate Agriculture Committee members and staff on issues surrounding re-authorization of the Farm Bill. He served nine years as senior advisor for agriculture and rural affairs, assisting House Appropriations Committee members.

A fourth-generation farmer, Jack was actively involved in his family's diversified farm operation near Oakesdale, WA, where they produced wheat, barley, lentils, dry peas, Kentucky bluegrass turf seed and hogs prior to his congressional aide service. Jack replaces Jim Fitzgerald, who accepted a position with USDA Rural Development in Washington D.C in July of 2006.

NAP Loss Reporting Reminders

Producers with Noninsured Assistance Program coverage are reminded that a notice of loss needs to be filed within 15 days of the date of weather related disaster events, or when damage to a crop becomes evident. In the event that you intend to destroy the crop, or will cease caring for the crop to take it to harvest, you need to contact the FSA office, and request a loss adjuster to verify the damage done prior to destroying or abandoning the crop.

USDA Rural Development Offers Value-Added Producer Grants

USDA Rural Development has asked that we assist them in sharing the news of the availability of Value-Added Producer Grants through their agency. Grants may be used for planning activities and for working capital for marketing value-added agricultural products and for farm-based renewable energy. Eligible applicants are independent producers, farmer and rancher cooperatives, agricultural producer groups, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures.

Applications are now being accepted for the 2007 funding cycle. The application period opened on April 16 and the application deadline is May 16. Applications must be POSTMARKED by May 16 if sent by mail or courier delivery service and they must be RECEIVED by May 16 if submitted through Grants.gov. The maximum grant award for planning activities this year is \$100,000 and for working capital it is \$300,000. \$19.3 million is available through the national competition. There is a 50% match requirement to be eligible for the funding.

The application guide and reference materials may be obtained at:

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/vadg.htm>

If you are interested in making application for the program, please contact Carlotta Donisi, Olympia Area Office of USDA Rural Development, at 360-704-7724 to discuss your project and for further assistance.

Lower Columbia Area FSA Office
Clark, Skamania, Cowlitz & Wahkiakum Counties
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Signature Authority

Signature authority is required to be on file in the FSA Office before signing any document or form on behalf of another. Signature authority can be evidenced by such things as copies of partnership papers, corporation papers, corporate resolution, or a valid FSA-211 Power of Attorney form signed and notarized, or witnessed in our office. When signing in a representative capacity for a sole proprietorship, corporation, trust, LLC, or estate, an indicator such as "by" or "for" should precede the signature.

Spouses may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest unless written notification denying a spouse this authority has been provided to the FSA office. A spouse may not, however, sign a Power of Attorney form on behalf of the spouse, nor may they sign on behalf of the other as an authorized signatory for entities. As mentioned above, signing for your spouse should also include a "by" or "for" preceding your signature.

Payment Limitation & Eligibility

Producers participating in certain FSA programs are subject to limitations on the total annual payments that can be received per "person." The maximum amounts a "person" can receive per year are: Direct payments - \$40,000; Counter-Cyclical payments - \$65,000; LDP (grains, soybeans, oilseeds)- \$75,000; LDP (honey, mohair, wool) - \$75,000; CRP and CREP rental payments -\$50,000; NAP - \$100,000; and CDP - \$80,000. FSA makes "person" and "actively engaged in farming" determinations based upon the information you file.

The Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) rule requires an individual or entity to certify whether their average adjusted gross income exceeds \$2.5 million, and if it exceeds that amount, whether more than 75% of their AGI is derived from farming, ranching, or forestry operations. Through 2007, an individual or entity is not eligible for certain program benefits during the crop year, program or fiscal year, if the three-year average of their adjusted gross income (AGI) exceeds \$2.5 million, AND less than 75% if their average AGI is derived from farming, ranching, or forestry operations.

Persons receiving USDA benefits are also required to be in compliance with conservation provisions. These provisions include the following: 1) not planting or producing an agricultural commodity on highly erodible fields without an approved Conservation Plan; 2) not planting or producing an agricultural commodity on any wetland which was converted (drained, filled, etc.) after December 23, 1985; 3) not converting wetlands by draining, dredging, filling, leveling, land clearing or other means in order to plant any crop, pasture, or ag commodity; and 4) not using proceeds from any FSA farm loan or any USDA cost-share program in such a way that might result in negative impacts to wetlands, except for projects which have been evaluated and approved by NRCS.

Above are the major eligibility and payment limitation rules, at this time. Once your eligibility and payment limitation forms are filed, they serve as continuous certifications, unless changes have occurred in your farming operation, conservation status, or AGI. This is why it is so critical that you notify us of any changes in your operation as soon they occur. Not reporting changes timely may delay your payments or cause other needless delays. Over the last few months we have requested that many producers update their payment limitation and eligibility forms. We appreciate your patience with this process and in returning the forms and information to us as quickly as you have.

On-farm Mortality Composting Information

A new website is now available and provides information about on-farm mortality composting. On-farm composting is an environmentally and economically sound alternative to conventional methods of carcass disposal. The On-Farm Mortality Composting Research and Education Project is a joint effort between the BIOAg program at WSU and the State Dept. of Ecology, with support from the State Dept. of Agriculture. The website is www.mortcompost.info.

2007 Farm Bill

Congress is responsible for writing the Farm Bill; however, historically USDA's Secretary often provides a proposal or priorities to Congress to consider when writing this new law. On January 31, 2007, Secretary Johanns released a 2007 Farm Bill Proposal. You may view the full text of this proposal on USDA's website at <http://www.usda.gov>.

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotapes, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Ave. SW, Washington D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.