

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

Agricultural Assistance Act of 2007

On May 25, 2007, President Bush signed into law the "U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007" (2007 Act).

The 2007 Act provides funds for a Crop Disaster Program (CDP), Livestock Compensation Program (LCP), Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), and Dairy Disaster Assistance Program (DDAP). The 2007 Act also extends several programs including the Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) through the end of 2007. FSA is currently in the process of developing regulations and software for signup and payments. In our area, the most likely programs that will apply will be the Crop Disaster Program and the Livestock Compensation Program. A signup period has not yet been announced for these programs, but we expect it to be announced in the next weeks.

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

Chehalis, WA (360) 748-0084

Counties that were declared a disaster area by the President or Secretary of Agriculture prior to February 28, 2007 will be eligible for this aid. The counties of Clark, Skamania, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum had several disaster designations each during the applicable time frames.

We will provide more information on these disaster programs in a special newsletter mailing, as soon as more details become available.

SPOTLIGHT ON: FSA Loan Programs

Impress Your Lender from the Start

There comes a time when most farm operations need credit to operate. While planting crops or repairing equipment may come naturally, dealing with lenders may seem intimidating to first-time borrowers. There are a few steps that borrowers can take to help make the loan application process go smoothly and quickly.

- Provide the lender with an accurate income statement and balance sheet.
- Project cash flow for the business for a least a year - or longer.
- Maintain a good set of farm business records and use them to make management decisions.
- Approach a lender in a businesslike manner with a business plan.
- Arrange credit in advance of major purchases.
- Have a repayment program developed.
- Give the lender time to review the plan and make suggestions - but not too much time.
- Maintain good communication with the lender such as asking questions as they arise.
- Avoid split lines of credit if possible by staying with one lender.
- Practice good production and financial management at all times.
- Do everything possible to build understanding and trust with your lender.
- Set long-range goals for the business and for the family and develop a plan for reaching them.

The Farm Service Agency works directly with borrowers through the direct loan programs. These programs target beginning farmers and others who may have difficulty obtaining loans from commercial lenders. FSA also makes guaranteed loans available through commercial lenders.

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.

Lower Columbia Area FSA Office
Clark, Skamania, Cowlitz & Wahkiakum Counties
11104 NE 149th St. C-500
Brush Prairie, WA 98606



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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 Jeff Peterson, Farm Loan Officer, at (360) 748-0084.

Area Committee Elections

Nominations are being accepted for producers who wish to serve on the Lower Columbia Area FSA Committee. This year, elections are being held in LAA#3, which encompasses all of Skamania County. The area has been represented by Dee Bajema for the last nine years, however she has served her maximum number of successive terms (3).

In order to serve on the Committee you must be considered an agricultural producer and must either live in, or conduct the majority of your farming within the boundaries of Skamania County. The responsibilities of the Committee include ensuring that federally mandated USDA programs are administered at the local level in the most effective manner. Members are expected to attend meetings that are held monthly and are compensated for their time and mileage. Meetings of the Lower Columbia Area FSA Committee are currently held on the last Thursday of the month.

If you would like to run for a position on the committee or nominate another farmer, please submit a nominating petition by August 1, 2007. Nominating petitions are available at the FSA office.

2007 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program

Signup for the 2007 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) began on October 1, 2006 and will continue through August 3, 2007. Late filed applications will be accepted through September 30, 2007, however a \$100 fee is required for any late filed DCP signup. Remember, you must sign a DCP contract for each year in order to receive payment. Final direct payments will be made in October.

Farm Records and Banking Changes

If you have changed any land you lease or sold any land, be sure to notify our office as soon as possible. If the land involved has DCP acres, the deadline for requesting farm divisions and combinations is August 1, 2007. For all other land, it is extremely important that we have your records correct, to avoid any delays in current or future program participation.

If your banking information has changed, be sure to notify us and fill out a new SF-1177 Direct Deposit form. This will ensure you receive your payment without unnecessary delays.

Limited FSA Staff Available in August



The FSA office in Brush Prairie will have an intermittent shortage of staff during the month of August. We will also be closed on August 14th and 15th, and August 21st through 23rd. If you must drop off papers, you may leave them with Rural Development across the hall or with NRCS next door. If you have a question or need a return phone call, please leave a voice mail message and your call will be returned. Your patience is appreciated.

Program Compliance Spot Checks

County FSA Offices have always performed a variety of compliance review and spot checks to ensure the accuracy of payments and integrity of programs. These spot checks have traditionally been selected locally through a variety of processes. Based upon the recommendation of the Office of Inspector General (OIG) to increase program efficiency, instead of locally selecting individual farms, contracts, loans, LDP's, etc. for spot check and review, a nationwide random selection of individual producers has been made for 2007. Producers were selected based on their participation and paid program benefits in CRP, DCP, NAP Marketing Assistance Loans and LDP's, and HEL/Wetland compliance. FSA will look at acreage compliance, production records and compliance with program rules. Reviews may involve field visits. Program compliance reviews are necessary to ensure the integrity of the farm programs, which is vital for public support. Your cooperation, if you are selected, is very much appreciated.

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.