

February 2013



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Coos/Curry County FSA Updates

DEAR PRODUCERS: Welcome to the new GovDelivery bulletins and updates service from your Lake County FSA office. Note that you are welcome to request to receive bulletins from more than one county and can add or remove individual subscriptions at any time.

Coos/Curry County Farm Service Agency

376 N Central Blvd.

Coquille, OR 97423

541/396-4323 X2

54/396-5106 Fax

www.fsa.usda.gov

Hours M – F

8:00 am - 4:30 pm

County Executive Director:

Bret A. Harris, Ext. 100

bret.harris@or.usda.gov

Program Technician:

Vacant due to budget

County Committee:

Farm Service Agency Announces Program Sign-up Dates

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers that the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 extended the authorization of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (the 2008 Farm Bill) for many Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) commodity, disaster, and conservation programs through 2013. FSA administers these programs.

The extended programs include, among others: the Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payment Program (DCP), the Average Crop Revenue Election Program (ACRE), and the Milk Income Loss Contract Program (MILC). FSA is preparing the following actions:

- FSA will begin sign-ups for DCP and ACRE for the 2013 crops on Feb. 19, 2013. The DCP sign-up period will end on Aug. 2, 2013; the ACRE sign-up period will end on June 3, 2013.
- The 2013 DCP and ACRE program provisions are unchanged from 2012, except that all eligible participants in 2013 may choose to enroll in either DCP or ACRE for the 2013 crop year. This means that eligible producers who were enrolled in ACRE in 2012 may elect to enroll in DCP in 2013 or may re-enroll in

Jim Donaldson, Chair

ACRE in 2013 (and vice versa).

Sharon Waterman, Vice-Chair

- All dairy producers' MILC contracts are automatically extended to Sept. 30, 2013. Eligible producers therefore do not need to re-enroll in MILC. Specific details regarding certain modifications to MILC will be released soon.

Beau Allen, Member

FSA will provide producers with information on program requirements, updates and signups as the information becomes available. Any additional details will be posted on FSA's website.

For more information about the programs and loans administered by FSA, visit any FSA county office or www.fsa.usda.gov.

USDA Finalizes New Microloan Program

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack unveiled a new microloan program mid-January that will expand access to credit for small farmers and ranchers and beginning and socially disadvantaged producers.

The microloan application process is simpler and requires less paperwork than traditional operating loans. Additionally, the requirement for managerial experience and loan security has been modified to ensure that small family operations and beginning farmers and ranchers can obtain the credit needed to start and continue an agricultural operation. This loan program will also be useful to specialty crop producers and operators of community supported agriculture (CSA).

Eligible applicants can apply for a maximum amount of \$35,000 to pay for initial start-up expenses such as hoop houses to extend the growing season, essential tools, irrigation, delivery vehicles, and annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents, marketing, and distribution expenses. As financing needs increase, applicants can apply for an operating loan up to the maximum amount of \$300,000 or obtain financing from a commercial lender under FSA's Guaranteed Loan Program.

Small farmers often rely on credit cards or personal loans, which carry high interest rates and have less flexible payment schedules, to finance their operations. The microloan program will expand access to credit and provide a simple and flexible loan process for small operators.

The current interest rate for Microloans is 1.25 percent.

In addition to microloans, FSA offers several farm loan programs that provide funding to purchase land, livestock, equipment, feed, seed, and supplies, or can be used to construct buildings or make farm improvements.

Producers interested in applying for a microloan or other FSA farm loan program should contact either Bret Harris at the Coquille office or the Farm Loan Staff located in the Roseburg USDA Service Center, 541/673-6071, Ext. 2. Farm Loan Manager is Jim Jutson at Ext 108, Jim.Jutson@or.usda.gov

Hispanic and Women Farmer and Rancher Claims Period

Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA in past decades can file claims until March 25, 2013.

The process offers a voluntary alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or female farmer and rancher who can prove that USDA denied their applications for loan or loan servicing assistance for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000.

As announced in February 2011, the voluntary claims process will make available at least \$1.33 billion for cash awards and tax relief payments, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief to eligible Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers. There are no filing fees to participate in the program.

USDA will continue reaching out to potential Hispanic and female claimants, around the country to inform those who may be eligible for this program.

Website: www.farmerclaims.gov

Phone: 1-888-508-4429

Deadline for Claims: March 25, 2013

Claimants can obtain a claims package in the mail by calling 1-888-509-4429 or by visiting the website www.farmerclaims.gov.

Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days of the closing.

Failure to submit the AFIDA form could result in civil penalties of 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.

The information required by the Secretary of Ag must be reported on form FSA-153. Copies of this form may be obtained from this office or on-line at:

<http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/efcommon/eFileServices/eForms/FSA153.PDF>

CELEBRATING IN FEBRUARY - BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Dates to Remember

- Feb 4 - 8 **Office on reduced hours** – please call for appointment
- Feb 18 Presidents Day, **Office Closed**
- Feb. 19 Regular COC Meeting – 10:00 a.m.
- Feb 19 DCP and ACRE sign-up period begins
- Mar 25 Deadline to file Hispanic and/or Women’s Discrimination Claim

Please remember: Due to federally mandated budget cuts, the Coos/Curry County FSA Office is operating with a staff of one. Please call ahead for an appointment if possible and be aware that field work and other activities may close the FSA Office periodically. If the FSA office is closed, information may be obtained and inquiries made at the NRCS Office in the Coquille Service Center – 541/396-2841, ext. 3.

If the FSA Office is closed and you need to speak to someone from FSA, please call District Director, Pam Davis at 971/409-2551 (cell).

For information regarding your GovDelivery subscription with the Coos/Curry County FSA Office, contact Bret A Harris, County Executive Director bret.harris@or.usda.gov or 541/396-4323 Ext 100.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9450, or call toll-free at (866) 632-9992 (English) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (English Federal-relay) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Federal-relay).

Conservation Agencies Seek Local Input at Annual Meeting

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA), with Curry and Coos Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) invite the public to their annual Conservation Stakeholder's Meeting at 1 p.m. February 8 at the Bandon Public Library.

Each year, the Local Working Group hosts a public meeting to determine the resource concerns and needs of the area and how to best address those needs. The NRCS provides agricultural producers with professional consultation and financial assistance through Farm Bill conservation programs to apply conservation practices on their land to address soil erosion, soil health, water quality, water quantity, and wildlife habitat. NRCS programs are voluntary and are therefore most successful when support is targeted for issues identified by local people.

Through our local Working Groups we work in partnership with interested community members to prioritize natural resource concerns and identify those conservation activities of greatest interest to landowners. The Local Working Group includes agricultural producers, owners/operators of nonindustrial private forest land, professionals representing agricultural and natural resource interests, and individuals representing a variety of disciplines in the soil, water, wetland, plant, forestry, and wildlife sciences who are familiar with agricultural and natural resource issues.

Farmers, ranchers, forest landowners, and other agricultural and conservation organizations are invited to participate in our annual meeting to review resource priorities in Coos and Curry Counties February 8 at the Sprague Room of the Bandon Public Library at 1 pm.

For more information or if you require special accommodation please contact Amy Wilson 541-396-2841 ext. 105. More information about conservation programs can be found on the Oregon NRCS Web site at www.or.nrcs.usda.gov.
