

May 2013



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## Coos/Curry County FSA Updates

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Questions? Please contact Bret A. Harris, County Executive Director, at 541-396-5106, Ext 100, [bret.harris@or.usda.gov](mailto:bret.harris@or.usda.gov) . Or for Farm Loans, contact Jim Jutson, Farm Loan Manager, at 541-673-6071, Ext 108, [jim.jutson@or.usda.gov](mailto:jim.jutson@or.usda.gov)

### Coos/Curry FSA Office

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**County Executive Director:**  
Bret A. Harris, x100

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**Farm Loan Manager:**  
Jim Jutson  
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### USDA Announces Farm Payments Scheduled to Resume

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) Administrator Juan M. Garcia announced that farm payments, which had been temporarily suspended due to sequestration, are scheduled to resume May 8. This includes payments for the 2011 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE), the Noninsured Crop Assistance Program (NAP) and the Milk Income Loss Contract Program (MILC).

On March 4, 2013, FSA began a temporary suspension of FSA program payments in order to assess the impact of sequestration and determine the least-disruptive process possible for carrying out required cuts. The Department will use the Secretary's limited authority to transfer funds to avoid reducing these program payments.

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### Farm Record Changes Due Soon

June 1, 2013 is the deadline to provide changes to your farm records at your local FSA office for the current crop year.

Producers who have bought or sold land, or added or dropped rented land from their operation must report those changes to the FSA office as soon as possible. A copy of the deed or recorded land contract for purchased property is needed to maintain accurate records with FSA. Failure to report changes can lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties. While making record updates, be sure to update signature authorizations. Farm and Entity updates are required before program enrollment.

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# 2013 FSA County Committee Elections - Candidate From Curry County Needed

The election of agricultural producers to the Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees is important to all farmers and ranchers, whether beginning or long-established, large or small operation. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. County Committee (COC) members are a critical component of FSA operations.

The intent is to have the COC reflect the makeup of the producers and represent all constituents. This means wherever possible, minorities, women or limited resource producers need to be on the committee to speak for these underrepresented groups.

County committees provide local input on:

- Commodity price support loans and payments
- Conservation programs
- Incentive, indemnity and disaster payments for some commodities
- Emergency programs
- Payment eligibility

FSA county committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws and members apply their judgment and knowledge to make local decisions.

## Election Period

June 17, 2013 – The nomination period begins.

Aug. 1, 2013 – This is the last day to file nomination forms (FSA-669A) at the local USDA Service Center.

Nov. 4, 2013 – Ballots mailed to eligible voters.

Dec. 2, 2013 – Last day to return completed ballots to the USDA Service Center.

Jan. 1, 2014 – Newly elected county committee members take office.

## Who Can Hold Office

To hold office as a county committee member, a person must meet the basic eligibility criteria:

- Participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA
- Be eligible to vote in a county committee election
- Reside in the local administrative area (LAA) in which the person is a candidate. For this election, you must reside in the Merrill - Malin area.

## Not have been:

- Removed or disqualified from the office of county committee member, alternate or employee
- Removed for cause from any public office or have been convicted of fraud, larceny, embezzlement or any other felony
- Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services.

## Nominations

To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign nomination form FSA-669A. The form includes a statement that the nominee agrees to serve if elected. The nomination form is available at USDA Service Centers and [online](#).

Individuals may nominate themselves or others as a candidate. Additionally, organizations representing minority and women farmers or ranchers may nominate candidates. Nomination forms are filed for the county committee

of the office that administers a producer's farm records.

The COC nomination period runs from June 17, 2013 through August 1, 2013.

### **Who Can Vote**

Agricultural producers of legal voting age may be eligible to vote if they participate or cooperate in any FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm also may be eligible to vote. More information about voting eligibility requirements can be found in the FSA fact sheet titled "FSA County Committee Election – Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a County Committee Member." Producers may contact their local USDA Service Center for more information.

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## **Acreage Reporting**

After spring planting, producers should certify their 2013 acreage. Filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs.

Failed acreage must be reported within 15 days of the disaster event and before disposition of the crop. Prevented planting must be reported no later than 15 days after the final planting date.

Acreage reports are required for many Farm Service Agency programs. For crops enrolled in programs other than NAP (Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program), acreage reports are to be certified by July 15.

Acreage reports on crops covered by NAP are due in the county office the earlier of 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest or grazing of the specific crop acreage being reported or July 15.

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## **CRP Sign-Up Starts May 20th**

USDA will conduct a four-week general sign-up for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), beginning May 20 and ending on June 14. CRP protects the nation's natural resources through voluntary participation, while providing significant economic and environmental benefits to rural communities across the United States.

Currently, about 27 million acres are enrolled in CRP. Producers that are accepted in the program can receive cost-share assistance to plant long-term, resource-conserving covers and receive an annual rental payment for the length of the contract which is 10-15 years.

Contracts on 3.3 million acres of CRP are set to expire on Sept. 30, 2013. Producers with expiring contracts or producers with environmentally sensitive land are encouraged to evaluate their options under CRP.

For more information on CRP and other FSA programs, visit a local FSA service center or [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## **Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Compliance**

Landowners and operators are reminded that in order to receive payments from USDA, they must be compliant with Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions. Farmers with HEL determined soils must apply tillage, crop residue and rotation requirements as specified in their conservation plan.

Producers should notify FSA prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to ensure compliance. If you intend to clear any trees to create new cropland, these areas will need to be reviewed to ensure any work will not

jeopardize your eligibility for benefits.

Landowners and operators can complete form AD-1026 Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification to determine whether a referral to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is necessary.

For more information on Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation provisions, contact a FSA County Office or visit the FSA website at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## Hay Net

Producers are encouraged to use Hay Net on the FSA website (<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet>). This online service allows producers with hay and those who need hay to post ads so they can make connections. Hay Net is a popular site for farmers and ranchers who have an emergency need. Individual ads can be posted free of charge by producers who complete a simple online registration form the first time they use the site.

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## USDA Microloans Expand Small Farm Finance Options

There's a new USDA loan program that might be the perfect fit for beginning farmers and ranchers seeking access to capital. On January 15, the USDA Farm Service Agency rolled out a new Microloan program designed to help farmers and ranchers with credit needs of \$35,000 or less. This new credit tool simplifies and streamlines the process for farmers obtaining loans under \$35,000; it cuts the paperwork burden in half and is built to fit the needs of smaller-scale farmers and ranchers.

According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, 71% of all farm operations gross less than \$25,000 per year. These farmers and ranchers are not typically served by agricultural lenders and may in fact have difficulty obtaining financing from commercial banks. The Microloan program is designed to better serve the unique capital needs of these operations. For growers who sell their crops at farmers' markets or through Community Supported Agriculture operations (CSAs), the Microloan program could be a great financial option to consider.

Farmers can use Microloan funds to pay for initial start-up expenses such as hoop houses to extend the growing season, essential tools, irrigation supplies, delivery vehicles, and annual expenses such as seed, utilities, land rents, marketing, and distribution expenses. The current interest rate for Microloans is 1.375%, which is also a great benefit for farmers and ranchers who are just starting out, need capital, and are operating on a tight budget.

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## Guaranteed Loan Program

The Farm Service Agency loan limit for the Guaranteed Loan Program has increased to \$1,302,000. The limit is adjusted annually based on data compiled by the National Agricultural Statistics Service. The lending limit increases every year according to an inflation index. The maximum combined guaranteed and direct farm loan indebtedness has increased to \$1,602,000.

As a reminder, the one-time loan origination fee charged on FSA guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans is 1.5 percent of the guaranteed portion of the loan. Producers should contact their local FSA County Offices with questions about farm loans.

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## Beginning and Limited Resource Farmers

FSA assists beginning farmers and or members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural

enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's median size.

Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).