

January 2013



Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)

Douglas County FSA News and Updates

DEAR PRODUCERS: Welcome to the new GovDelivery bulletins and updates service from your 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.

Douglas County FSA Office

2593 NW Kline St

Roseburg, OR 97471-8827

Phone: 541 673.6071 ext 2

Fax: 541 672.3818

Hours: 8:00 am - 4:30 pm M - F

www.fsa.usda.gov/OR

County Executive Director:

Roseanna Breeding

roseanna.breeding@or.usda.gov

Farm Loan Manager: Jim Jutson,

jim.jutson@or.usda.gov

Program Technician:

Tyree Mahlberg,

tyree.mahlberg@or.usda.gov

County Committee:

Jack Laurance

Gerald Briggs

Ron Hjort

Marilyn Manfrina-Burke

2013 County Committee Elections - Ballots Due FEB 4, 2013

Please remember to vote in the County Committee elections; Local Administrative Area (LAA) 3. Ballots were mailed to known eligible voters on January 7, 2013 for the area which includes Douglas County south of Highway 138, and Highway 42, including Myrtle Creek, Days Creek, Canyonville, Tiller, Riddle and Azalea in southern Douglas County.

VOTE for one candidate and **SIGN THE BALLOT RETURN ENVELOPE** where indicated. **UNSIGNED BALLOTS ARE NOT VALID.** If you are voting as a representative of an entity, you must have signature authority and include the **BY** or **FOR** in your signature (i.e. Doe Farms Inc by John Doe). Spouses cannot sign for each other.

Deadline to return your ballot is February 4, 2013. Ballots will be counted at 10:30 am on Wednesday, February 6, 2013 in the Douglas County FSA office.

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

Dates to Remember:**Phone:** 1-888-508-4429**Feb 4** COC election ballots due**Deadline for Claims: March 25, 2013****Feb 6** COC meeting 10:30 amClaimants can obtain a claims package in the mail by calling 1-888-509-4429 or by visiting the website www.farmerclaims.gov.**Feb 18** Presidents Day, Office Closed**Feb 19** DCP and ACRE sign-up period begins

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 the Farm Loan Staff located in the Roseburg USDA Service Center at 541.673.6071.

Farming Operation Changes

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. Making record changes now will save time in the Spring.

IRS 1099 Changes

Calendar year 2012 brought changes to the way FSA reports farm program payments to the producer and to the IRS. In past years, IRS Forms 1099-G would be issued to show all program payments received from the Farm Service Agency, regardless of the amount.

For calendar year 2012, producers whose total reportable payments from FSA were less than \$600 will not receive IRS Form 1099-G. Also, producers who receive payments from more than one county will only receive one Form 1099-G if the total of all payments from all counties is \$600 or more.

The same changes will apply to producers and vendors who normally receive IRS Form 1099-MISC from FSA.

Bank Account Changes

Current policy mandates that FSA payments be electronically transferred into a bank account. In order for timely payments to be made, producers need to notify the FSA county office when an account has been changed or if another financial institution purchases the bank where payments are sent. Payments can be delayed if the FSA office is not aware of updates to bank

Appeal Process

After an FSA official makes a decision on a request for USDA services or application, the producer will be sent a letter informing him/her of the decision and options that can be pursued.

Generally, program participants have three choices — an informal review with the original agency decision-maker, an opportunity for mediation and finally an appeal to the next level of authority within the agency. County office staff has further details.

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).