



Douglas County FSA News

Douglas County FSA Office
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April 2009

Upcoming Events:

May 1, 2009 – Sales closing date to purchase Nursery Insurance, contact your crop insurance agent
May 18, 2009 - Deadline to pay a buy-in fee for 2008 for disaster assistance programs (see article below)
June 30, 2009 – Deadline to crop report acreage (see article below)
August 14, 2009 – Deadline to sign-up in Direct and Counter Cyclical Program

ACREAGE REPORTING

Producers or landowners who participate in FSA programs are required to file a timely and accurate acreage report by June 30, 2009. All cropland on farms which receive Direct and Counter-Cyclical payments, Marketing Assistance Loans, and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP) must be reported. **If you plan on doing a wool LDP in the future you need to crop report now.** In addition, all land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program and land in which Non-Insured Assistance Program benefits are received must be reported.

REPORTING CHANGES IN YOUR FARMING OPERATION

Each year, if you participate in USDA programs you are required to report any of the below changes to the Farm Service Agency office.

- Change in the size of the operation due to adding or removing land.
- Change of land lease. Example from cash to share rent or vice versa.
- Change in the structure of the farming operation: Example: from a partnership to corporation.
- Change in members shares of the farming operation.
- Change in contributions of farm inputs of capital, equipment, active personal labor, or management

It is important to report the above changes. Failure to report these changes could cause you to be under paid, or worst yet over paid, which means someone else is not getting paid their correct amount.

CAN YOUR SPOUSE SIGN DOCUMENTS ON YOUR BEHALF?

Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the County Office from either spouse. There are exceptions to the rule. For example, spouses may not sign a power of attorney (FSA-211) on behalf of each other or sign on behalf of the other as an authorized signatory for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities. Spouses must have a power of attorney on file or sign personally for claim settlements, such as promissory notes. A spouse's authority to sign documents on behalf of the other spouse does not entitle a spouse to review or receive agency records of the other spouse.

HIGHLY ERODIBLE AND WETLAND PROVISIONS OF THE USDA

To earn and remain eligible for program benefits you must comply with USDA's Highly Erodible and Wetland Provisions. Under these provisions you **may**

- ❖ NOT plant annually tilled crops on highly erodible fields unless actively applying a conservation plan.
- ❖ NOT plant annually tilled crops on wetland converted after December 23, 1985.
- ❖ NOT convert wetlands by draining, dredging, filling, leveling, or by any other means that would allow the planting of any crop, pasture, annually tilled crop, or other such crops.
- ❖ NOT to use proceeds from any FSA loan received after December 23, 1985 that will contribute to the conversion of a wetland to produce an annually tilled crop, or contribute to the excessive erosion of highly erodible land.

CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE VIOLATIONS

Persons convicted under Federal or State law of a controlled substance violation will be ineligible for payments or benefits as provided by the Code of Federal Regulations (7 CFR part 718).

BUY-IN WAIVER EXTENSION APPROVED FOR DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Producers who did not obtain crop insurance or Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for 2008 can pay a buy-in fee through May 18, 2009, to become eligible for 2008 disaster assistance programs if they suffered 2008 agricultural losses due to natural disaster.

Producers who have not already taken the necessary steps to become eligible for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE), Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP), and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP) are required to complete the following steps by May 18, 2009:

- Pay a \$100 "buy-in" fee per crop. The maximum fee is \$300 per county, per producer, not to exceed \$900 for multi-county producers.
- In the case of each insurable crop, **excluding grazing land**, agree to obtain a policy or plan of insurance for the next insurance year for which crop insurance is available; coverage level should equal 70 percent or more of the yield at 100 percent of the price.
- In the case of each noninsurable crop, agree to file the required paperwork and pay the applicable administrative NAP coverage fee by the applicable state application closing date for the next available year.

Producers who choose to "buy in" under this provision will be considered, for insured crops, to have obtained a policy or plan of insurance for the 2008 crop year at a level of coverage not to exceed 70 percent of the yield at 100 percent of the price. For noninsurable crops, producers will be considered to have a level of coverage equal to 70 percent of the yield. These levels of coverage will be used to calculate the 2008 SURE guarantee.

Producers who meet the definition of "Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource," or "Beginning Farmer or Rancher," are not required to pay the buy-in fee.

FSA HAS A VARIETY OF LOAN PROGRAMS TO HELP FARMERS AND RANCHERS.

FSA may be able to assist your farming operation with an operating loan. The rate for operating loans approved in April 2.25 percent.

It is the time of year where to begin thinking of our spring planting needs. Whether you need loan funds to finance your spring needs for fertilizer, seed, or you need to upgrade your equipment line with a new tractor, planter, baler or perhaps you have been thinking about expanding your operation or need credit to increase your production, FSA may be able to help.

FSA's loan programs are designed to help family farmers who are temporarily unable to obtain private or commercial credit. FSA also provides credit to beginning farmers, most do not have sufficient net worth to qualify for commercial credit. In other cases, they are farmers who have suffered financial setbacks from natural and economic disasters, or who have limited resources with which to establish and maintain profitable farming operations.

Some farmers obtain their credit needs through the use of loan guarantees. Under a guaranteed loan, a local agricultural lender makes and services the loan, and FSA guarantees it against loss; in most cases this is a 90 percent guarantee of loss. In certain limited circumstances, a 95-percent guarantee is available.

For those unable to qualify for a loan guarantee from a commercial lender, FSA also makes loans directly to farmers, which are serviced by an FSA official. FSA has the responsibility of providing credit counseling and supervision to its direct loan borrowers with tools like completing a thorough assessment of the farming operation. The Agency, often with the input of other industry experts, evaluates the adequacy of the real estate and facilities, machinery and equipment, livestock, financial and production management, and the farmer's goals. An FSA official then works one-on-one with the farmer to develop a plan of operation which will help the farmer achieve their goals, both short and long term with the goal of farmer's graduation to commercial credit.

Farm loans must be fully secured and can only be approved for those who have repayment ability and meet certain eligibility criteria.

FSA also offers loans for beginning farmers. Beginning farmers must have been in the business less than 10 years and meet certain other requirements. In addition FSA offers rural youth loans. These are available as direct loans only and have a maximum loan amount of \$5,000. Rural youth loans may be made to individuals who are sponsored by a project advisor, such as a 4-H Club, FFA or local vocational instructor. Individuals must be at least 10 but not more than 20 years old to be eligible. The FSA also has funds and programs to help socially disadvantaged and minority farmers as well.

For more information on FSA loan programs, please contact your local USDA Service Center or FSA County Office located at 2440 NW Troost St., Ste. 201, Roseburg, OR 97470 or call telephone number 541-673-6071 x 2.

NRCS ANNOUNCES SIGNUP FOR THE HEALTHY FOREST RESERVE PROGRAM IN OREGON

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has announced funding for management activities on working forest lands through the Healthy Forest Reserve Program (HFRP).

The Oregon HFRP sign up is open from **April 6 until April 30, 2009 for lands in Oregon's Lane, Coos, Douglas, Josephine, Curry and Jackson Counties.**

In Oregon, the focus of HFRP is to help landowners manage their land for sustainable, profitable timber harvests while securing long-term protection from regulatory restrictions protecting the endangered Northern Spotted Owl under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Through HFRP, landowners may apply for financial assistance. After developing a Forest Stewardship Plan, program participants receive funding to implement selected forest management activities, such as thinning, tree planting and stream buffers. With HFRP, landowners participate through one of the following enrollment options:

10-Year HFRP Restoration Agreement: Program participants develop a Stewardship Plan to manage the land for sustainable timber harvests and Northern Spotted Owl habitat and receive 50 percent of the cost of selected conservation practices. With HFRP, the landowners continue harvests as described in the Stewardship Plan. They also receive protection from ESA regulations related to the Northern Spotted Owl. The landowners retain ESA protections into the future, as long as the Stewardship Plan is followed.

HFRP Permanent Easement: With a permanent easement, landowners continue to manage the land for timber production while permanently maintaining the property as working forest land and Northern Spotted Owl habitat. The program pays 100 percent of the easement value and 100 percent of the cost of selected activities described in a Forest Stewardship Plan. The landowners also receive protection from ESA regulations related to the Northern Spotted Owl for as long as the Stewardship Plan is followed.

To be eligible for HFRP in Oregon, applications must meet the following criteria:

- The property is 40 acres or more of privately owned Douglas fir/mixed conifer forest land;
- The land includes known or potential Northern Spotted Owl habitat or provides connectivity between Coast and Cascade Range habitats;
- The landowner agrees to implement a Forest Stewardship Plan on the land; and
- The landowner intends to maintain the property as working forest land.

This is the first year HFRP has been available in Oregon. Additional information about HFRP in Oregon can be found online at: <http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/hfrp/index.html>.

Based on funding, a limited number of applications will be awarded. HFRP is reauthorized under the 2008 Farm Bill; the proposed 2008 program rule can be viewed on the Federal Register Web site at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2008/pdfs/hfrp1-14-09.pdf>

Additional options for forest management assistance are available to private, non-industrial forest landowners statewide through Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). EQIP provides program participants with payments to offset the cost of developing forest management plans and installing conservation practices.

For more information on HFRP or EQIP, landowners and land managers can visit the NRCS Web site at: www.or.nrcs.usda.gov or contact the Roseburg Service Center 2440 NW Troost St., Suite 202; Roseburg, Oregon 97470-2089 Phone: (541) 673-6071.

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Do you wish to receive the newsletter by email? Please contact Andy at 541-673-6071 extension 104 or by email at andrew.schmidt@or.usda.gov and you will be emailed the newsletter.

Attention: Agricultural group members and leaders. Do you want FSA to come to your meeting and talk about what FSA has to offer you? If so contact Andrew Schmidt at 541-673-6071 extension 104 or by email at andrew.schmidt@or.usda.gov

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to visit the USDA Douglas County Service Center should contact Andy Schmidt, at 541-673-6071 extension 104, or email andrew.schmidt@or.usda.gov.

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