

Judith Basin FSA County Office  
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### County Committee Members

Brett Noland, Chairperson  
Carolyn Askins, Vice-Chairperson  
Terry Metcalfe, Regular Member

### FSA Office Personnel

Mary Polzin, Program Technician  
Chris Schmitt, Program Technician  
Kevin Taylor, CED

### Dates to Remember:

**March 17** – NAP sales closing date for all crops except value loss and honey

**March 17** – Crop insurance sales closing date for 2007 spring-seeded crops

**March 20** – Public comment meeting on CRP managed haying and grazing at the Hampton Inn of Great Falls. FSA will host the meeting to start at 1:00 PM

**March 31** – Final loan/LDP availability date for barley, canola, crambe, flaxseed, honey, oats, rapeseed, wheat and sesame seed harvested in 2007

**April 1** – Deadline for payment limitation changes

**NAP Pull-Off Date** – May 1st

**June 2** - Final loan/LDP availability date for corn, dry peas, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard, safflower, soybeans, small chickpeas, sunflowers harvested in 2007



# Judith Basin County

## March 2008

### FSA Working Across Montana

FSA in Montana issued more than \$242.5 million in program payments and loans to Montana farmers and ranchers during Fiscal Year 2007 running from October 1, 2006 to September 30, 2007. Following is a breakdown of the amounts issued through some of the programs administered by FSA in Montana:

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)	\$116,612,674
Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)	\$774,181
Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP)	\$80,462,148
Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)	\$723,740
Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs)	\$1,917,345
Milk Income Loss Contract Extension Program	\$419,932
14 Youth Loans	\$61,200
88 Beginning Farmer Loans	\$8.0 million
61 Minority Producer Loans	\$3.4million

A summary of the amounts issued and for what programs may be found on the Montana FSA website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt>. The summary also includes the total of the amount of payments issued by each individual county.

**National Agriculture Week is March 16-22, 2008.** It is a time to celebrate American agriculture and honor the people who work to meet our everyday needs. FSA in Montana thanks the many farmers and ranchers we work with on a daily basis.

## Honey Loans Available

Marketing assistance loans and loan deficiency payments for 2007 crop year honey are available until March 31, 2008. The national loan rate for honey is \$0.60 per pound. Market prices currently exceed the loan rate, so LDPs are currently not available.

To be eligible for a loan, the producer must have produced honey in the US during the calendar year for which the loan is requested, and extracted the honey on or before December 31 of the applicable crop year; have continuous beneficial interest in the honey through date of repayment of the loan; and been responsible for the financial risk of keeping the bees. Producers are responsible for maintaining the quality of farm stored honey during the term of the loan.

Honey must be produced in the US by an eligible producer, from an approved floral source, and stored in approved containers.

The containers must be marked with the producer's name, type of honey, number of container and net weight. Pre-loan inspections are required before the loans can be disbursed.

Honey used as collateral may not be disposed of without approval of the FSA county office staff.

## NAP Deadline – March 17

The sales closing date for all Noninsurable (NAP) crops except value loss and honey is fast approaching. **Monday, March 17, 2008**, is the final date for producers to file an application (CCC-471) for NAP coverage for many spring crops. An administrative service fee is required. The service fee is \$100 per crop per administrative county or \$300 per producer per county, not to exceed \$900 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties. Service fees may be waived for limited-resource producers. Payment of the service fee does not guarantee coverage since there are other eligibility requirements that must also be met. Please check with the county office for those eligibility requirements.

## Mixed Grain/Hay Loan LDP Eligibility

USDA does not establish loan rates for mixed commodities. A mixed commodity harvested as grain that does not meet grading standards is not eligible for a loan or Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP). A mixed commodity that is hayed or harvested as silage is not eligible for an LDP.

Eligibility for Grain/Oilseeds/Pulse Crops Harvested as **Grain** – If a mixed commodity is harvested as grain and an application for a farm-stored loan or LDP is submitted then a sample of the harvested crop must be taken to a licensed Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) laboratory for grading, at the producer's expense. Loan or LDP eligibility will be determined based on the results of the sample.

Eligibility for Grain/Oilseeds/Pulse Crops Harvested as **Other Than Grain** – If the mixed commodity is harvested as hay or silage, there is no test to determine the percentage of each commodity in the mixture to establish the grade and class. Therefore, crops planted in a mixture and hayed or harvested for silage are not eligible for an LDP.

A commodity planted as a nurse crop with alfalfa may be eligible for an LDP if a full seeding is planted and the commodity is reported as the intended use for grain or forage. The County Committee may require documentation to support the seeding rate.

## Final Loan/LDP Availability is March 31

March 31 is the final loan/LDP availability date for Barley, Canola, Flaxseed, Oats, Rapeseed, Crambe and Wheat. For the 2007 crop of the commodities listed above, loans and LDP's will no longer be available after March 31, 2008.

## Managed CRP Grazing Periods Announced and Public Meeting

The Montana State FSA Committee has established the CRP managed grazing periods for 2008. Regulations limit the total grazing period to 120 days of grazing in one grazing period and managed grazing must end by September 30<sup>th</sup>. The nesting period in which no grazing can occur is May 15<sup>th</sup> through July 15<sup>th</sup>. The spring managed grazing can occur from March 15<sup>th</sup> through May 14<sup>th</sup> and the fall grazing period can occur from July 16<sup>th</sup> through September 13<sup>th</sup>. Since only two grazing periods are allowed, producers who cannot begin grazing until August 2<sup>nd</sup> will only be able to graze through September 13<sup>th</sup>.

A public meeting has been scheduled at the Hampton Inn, 2301 14<sup>th</sup> St SW, Great Falls, MT. The meeting will begin at 1:00 PM. The purpose of the meeting is to give the public the opportunity to comment on changes to managed haying and grazing on CRP.



### DID YOU KNOW!!!

Americans today consume 17.3 billion quarts of popped popcorn each year! The average American eats about 68 quarts!

## Montana Couples Can Receive Estate Planning Incentive

The first 40 couples who work through an estate planning process can receive \$100 off of any follow-up attorney fees as part of a free Web-based program for young and old farm and ranch couples offered by Montana State University (MSU) Extension.

To get the process started, MSU Extension developed easy-to-use estate planning materials on the Web. The Next Generation Estate Planning project guides couples through estate planning, enabling them to make informed decisions by explaining basic terms and how to pass along property without probate costs. It describes how property can be dispersed when there is no will and gives details of the probate process, including establishing custodial accounts for children under 18.

All materials and forms are available free of charge and help prepare couples for a visit to an estate planning attorney. The first 40 couples to complete the form before June 1, 2008 can receive a \$100 certificate to be used toward attorney expenses for estate planning, which the attorney returns to Marsha Goetting, MSU Extension Family Economics Specialist for payment.

For further information, log on to <http://www.nextgeneration.montana.edu> and view the cover letter or contact Marsha Goetting at 406/994-5695 or [goetting@montana.edu](mailto:goetting@montana.edu).

This project is available through a grant from the Washington State University Western Center for Risk Management Education. Collaborators include MSU Extension, MT Grain Growers, MT Department of Ag and the State Bar of MT.

## ***Inside this Issue***

**FSA Accomplishments**  
**Honey Loans**  
**NAP Deadline**  
**Managed CRP Grazing Periods**  
**Announced and Public Meeting**  
**Estate Planning Assistance**

### ***Important Dates to Remember***

**March 16-22** – National Ag Week  
**March 17** – NAP sales closing date for all crops except value loss and honey  
**March 20** – Public CRP meeting In Great Falls at the Hampton Inn  
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### **Make Sure Your Proper Signature Authorization is on File**

FSA reviews every producer's eligibility file to determine who is authorized to sign program documents in representative capacities and reviews all program documents to determine if the signature format is proper.

For a complete listing of FSA signature requirements, contact the FSA office or logon to the Montana FSA website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt> and click on the **Signature Authority Pamphlet** link under "In the News."

### **Ensure Benefits Are Received in a Timely Manner**

To ensure USDA program benefits are received in a timely manner, please ensure you are consistent in the way you are presenting your operation to all USDA agencies including NRCS, Risk Management Agency (RMA), FSA and any other USDA agency programs you may partake in. For example, if you have signed up for program benefits with FSA as Joe Farmer, please sign up with NRCS as Joe Farmer. This will ensure Joe Farmer has completed all program paperwork and is eligible to receive payments. When in doubt, ask your county office.