



NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2006

Kittitas County FSA News Today

Kittitas County FSA

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Office Hours

Monday – Friday
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM



Kittitas County Committee

Tom Bull, Chair
Bart Bland, V-Chair
Rick Haberman, Member
Barb Weber, Advisor

Office Staff

Betty Cervine, PT
Brent Reitmeier, CED

Next COC Meeting

December 7, 2006
9:00 AM

WA State FSA Website

<http://www.usda.gov/wa/>

National FSA Website

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov>

National USDA Website

<http://www.usda.gov>



2006 COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

Ballots for Committee Elections in Local Administrative Area # 2 were mailed out by November 3rd, 2006. This year's nominations are for a committee member to represent producers in Local Administrative Area (LAA) # 2. LAA # 2, also known as the Denmark Area, is currently represented by committee member Tom Bull who is eligible for reelection. Ballots must be returned by December 4th 2006. Please remember to sign your ballot return envelope. The following have been nominated and have agreed to serve if elected to the County Committee:

Tom Bull 4th generation farmer who lives in the Denmark area. Tom and his wife raise timothy, alfalfa and oats.

Brent De Koning 2nd generation farmer who lives in the Denmark area. Brent and his family raise timothy and oats, corn and wheat.

The FSA farmer elected committee system has been a key factor in the successful administration of farm programs. The Secretary of Agriculture considers the committee member very important to the success of the farm programs Congress has provided. The committee members assist in carrying out programs assigned to the FSA committees. Their duties include:

- ▶ Informing farmers of the purpose and provisions of FSA programs.
- ▶ Keeping the State FSA aware of adverse weather conditions.
- ▶ Participating in county meetings as necessary.
- ▶ Performing other duties as assigned by the State FSA Committee.

The committee is responsible for the overall direction of the operations, the County FSA Office and the administration of the various farm programs at the county level.

Elected county committee members have an outstanding opportunity to serve both farmers and the public. The programs they help administer directly affect the welfare of our farmers.

We are proud of the county committee's record of service to farmers and of this system of farmer-elected leaders. We look forward to welcoming the newly elected member so your vote is very important. If you live in LAA 2 and don't receive a ballot, feel free to notify the Kittitas County FSA office.

Ballots will be tabulated on Thursday, December 7, 2006 beginning at 10 a.m. at the Ellensburg USDA Service Center.

FSA AGRICULTURAL LENDING PROGRAM

Each year Congress allocated dollars to the Farm Service Agency to operate an agricultural lending program. We presently have priority funding set aside to assist beginning farmers with their farming operations. Also, a portion of the funds is specifically allocated for minorities and women. While FSA farm loans are available to all qualified applicants, by setting aside funds specifically for minorities and women, it ensures that they will receive a portion of available funds.

FSA has direct lending authority in which FSA makes a real estate or operating loan directly to farmers and ranchers. FSA also applies a federal guarantee on loans made by banks and other agricultural lending institutions.

Funding availability relies on Congressional authorizations. Contact the Yakima County FSA office (509) 454-5746 if you have questions about availability of loan funds or other questions regarding FSA's loan programs.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP) DEADLINE

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced a new deadline of November 17th for Washington producers interested in participating in a popular cost-share program called the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). NRCS wants to help producers develop a sound conservation plan as the basis for their cost-share contracts. In an effort to provide more time for applicants and NRCS staff to work together on this plan, the new November 17th deadline is critical for producer participation.

EQIP is a voluntary, cost-share assistance program that funds conservation practices including those aimed at helping farmers get better use of irrigation water; managing run-off nutrients and/or animal waste; improving the health of native plant communities; and reducing soil loss. Last year Washington agricultural producers qualified for more than \$20 million in cost-share assistance through the program. EQIP has become a workhorse program for helping landowners apply critical conservation practices to their land. The program provides key technical and financial tools to help producers get practical conservation measures on the ground. Those conservation practices and activities, in turn, protect soil, water, and wildlife resources for all of Washington's residents.

The program is guided by a coalition of local government groups with ties to conservation using a locally led process known as the 'local work group' or LWG. The LWG identifies priority resource concerns and recommends which resource treatment or conservation practices will best fit local needs; cost-share rates; and rules on how the federal dollars will be allocated.

Interested producers can apply at any of the local NRCS field offices. For the location of your local NRCS office, visit the NRCS website at www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov or call (509) 925-8585.

ANNUAL REMINDERS

Annually, FSA is required to notify producers of several program provisions. Please review the following provisions so that one does not jeopardize their ability to take advantage of FSA programs.

Signature Authorities: As a community property state, in the state of Washington, spouses can sign for each other as individuals without any specific written authority. If this authorization is not desired, a written request to rescind the implied authorization must be submitted; otherwise your spouse can sign on your behalf. Partnerships and entities are required to have signature authority information on file before signature can be accepted.

Continuous Forms: The forms for determining payment eligibility (including adjusted gross income certifications) and for certifying compliance with "Sodbuster-Swampbuster" provisions are continuous forms – meaning if nothing changes, updates are not necessary. However, if there are any changes, updates will need to be filed. Changes requiring updates include addition/deletion of land; draining, dredging, filling or clearing land; changing the status of the participant (i.e. forming/dissolving a partnership/entity or adding a new members); or a change in income status. In short, if there is any type of change, FSA should be notified and we will determine if an update is needed.

Payment Limitations: The following programs have annual limitations on the amount a "person" (as determined by the county committee) can earn in a given program year: DCP direct payments - \$40,000; DCP counter-cyclical payments - \$65,000; Total of gains from marketing loans and LDP's for all commodities except wool, peanuts, mohair, and honey - \$75,000; Total of wool, peanuts, mohair, and honey - \$75, 000, Conservation Reserve Program annual rental payments – 50,000, Noninsured Assistance Program - \$100,000; Trade Adjustment Assistance - \$10,000.

Direct Deposit: Every year we issue several payments to bank accounts that have been terminated or changed. This often occurs when banks restructure, causing account numbers or routing numbers to change. Please keep up posted on these changes so your payment goes to your account.