

Lewis & Clark County FSA
790 Colleen Street
Helena, MT 59601
(406) 449-5000

County Committee Members

Carol Troy, Chairperson
 Gary Dobler, Vice-Chair
 John H. Baucus, Member

FSA Office Personnel

Nina Fonk, Co. Executive Director
 Kathy Peters, Program Technician
 Lesley Egbert, Program Technician
 Fred Smith, Farm Loan Manager
 Hal Plummer, Field Person



Dates to Remember:

March 13 – NRCS program signup deadline

March 15 – Spring grazing on CRP acres begins (with approval)

March 16 – NAP sales closing date for all crops except value loss crops and honey

March 16 – Crop insurance sales closing date for 2009 spring-seeded crops

March 25-28 – FFA Convention – Great Falls.

March 31 – Final loan/LDP availability date for various crops harvested in 2008

NAP Pull off date – May 1

May 14 – Spring grazing on CRP acres ends

May 15 – Beginning date of primary nesting season (CRP)

May 15 – NRCS ranking deadline

June 1 – DCP & ACRE signup deadline

June 15 – NRCS contracting deadline



Lewis & Clark County FSA News

March 2009

2009 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program Signup

The 2009 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payment (DCP) program signup for farms with base acres has started and will continue until June 1, 2009. Farms may not be enrolled after June 1 of the applicable contract period. There are no late filed provisions for contract years 2009-2012. Over the next several months we will be mailing appointment notifications to those who normally participate. If you do not receive an appointment notification by April 1 and you wish to participate, please contact the FSA office.

Commodities covered by DCP include: wheat, corn, grain sorghum, including dual purpose varieties that can be harvested as grain; barley, oats, soybeans, canola, flaxseed, mustard seed, safflower, crambe, sesame seed, rapeseed and sunflowers including oil and non-oil varieties. Pulse crops have been added as an eligible commodity for the 2009 crop year for counter-cyclical payments only. Pulse crops include dry peas, lentils, small chickpeas (Garbanzo bean, Desi), and large chickpeas (Garbanzo bean, Kabuli). Base acreage may not exceed the available DCP cropland acreage on the farm. A producer with the sum of the base acreage on the farm with 10 acres or less must be a minority or limited resource farmer or rancher to be eligible for DCP payments. Reconstitutions of farms with 10 base acres or less are now allowed.

Direct and counter-cyclical payments for the 2009 year will be made on 83.3 percent of the farm's base acreage. Final direct payments will be issued in October 2009.

Direct payment rates are:

Barley	\$0.24/bu
Corn	\$0.28/bu
Grain Sorghum	\$0.35/bu
Oats	\$0.024/bu
Other Oilseeds	\$0.80/cwt
Soybeans	\$0.44/bu
Wheat	\$0.52/bu

Planting flexibility is allowed but includes planting restrictions for fruits and vegetables on base acreage without farm or producer history. To maintain eligibility: 1) meet highly erodible land and wetland provisions requirements; 2) report all cropland acres; 3) meet actively engaged in farming requirements; and 4) comply with adjusted gross income provisions. Payment limitation amounts are \$40,000 for direct payments and \$65,000 for counter-cyclical payments.

Eligibility for Disaster Program

Fifteen Montana counties were declared primary natural disaster areas during the period beginning January 1, 2008 and continuing.

The disaster designation has an important significance in those counties as it allows eligible producers within those 15 counties (including Broadwater) and contiguous counties (including Lewis & Clark) to participate in the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE). SURE is one of the disaster programs created under the 2008 Farm Bill. It provides financial assistance for crop production and/or quality losses due to a natural disaster. Two triggers make the program available:

- A Secretarial disaster designation **and** at least a 10 percent crop production loss on at least one crop of economic significance which is defined as a crop which is expected to contribute at least 5 percent of the farm's income ; or
- In the absence of a Secretarial disaster declaration, farms in which the actual production on the farm is less than 50 percent of the normal production on the farm. Producers in counties that did not receive a secretarial declaration or contiguous county declaration have only this option available to qualify for SURE.

In addition, producers must have crop insurance or Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for all crops in all counties, excluding grazing lands. SURE does not pay for losses on crops intended for grazing. A signup period for 2008 SURE has not been announced as of yet.

2009 NRCS Program Deadlines Announced

The 2009 NRCS program deadlines have been announced. The 2009 program signup period for NRCS programs has been extended to March 13, 2009. The ranking deadline for 2009 program applications has been set for May 15, 2009. The program contracting deadline is June 15, 2009. The NRCS Field Office will be contacting the applicants in the next couple of months. If you would like more information, please contact the local NRCS Field Office at (406) 449-5000, extension 3.



Important March 16 Deadline

For the 2009 crop year it is imperative to purchase Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and catastrophic (CAT) level of crop insurance for all insurable and non-insurable crops. This is not only for production coverage but also for eligibility for the new permanent disaster programs created in the 2008 Farm Bill.

In order for producers to be **eligible** for assistance under the Supplemental Revenue Assistance (**SURE**) Program and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, and Honey Bees, (**ELAP**), and the Tree Assistance Program (**TAP**) producers must obtain a plan of insurance for each insurable and non-insurable commodity on the farm, excluding grazing. To be eligible for assistance under the Livestock Forage Program (**LFP**) producers must obtain either coverage under the Pasture, Rangeland, and Forage Rainfall Index Pilot Program through crop insurance, or NAP coverage, or both on their grazing land.

Producers must file the required paperwork and pay the administrative fee by the NAP closing date of **March 16, 2009** for all crops except value-loss and honey. The deadline for value-loss and honey for 2009 has passed.

Please contact the FSA office before March 16 to ensure your eligibility for the new disaster assistance programs.



Final Loan/LDP Availability

March 31 is the final loan/LDP availability date for Barley, Canola, Flaxseed, Oats, Rapeseed, Crambe and Wheat. For the 2008 crop of the commodities listed above, loans and LDP's will no longer be available after March 31, 2009.



County Committee Election Results

Carol Troy was re-elected to the Lewis & Clark County Committee for an additional three years (2009-2011). Congratulations to Carol on her re-election.

We would like to express our appreciation to Carol Troy, Gary Dobler, and John H. Baucus for their service on the County Committee.

In addition, we would like to thank those producers who participated in the election. The County Committee election process would not work without your participation.

Changes to FSA Payment Processing

FSA deployed a new payment processing system the first part of December.

Through the new system, all payments made through direct deposit will be processed through the Federal Reserve Bank and are to be received in the participant's account within 2-3 days of processing. Notification of payment will be mailed from FSA in Kansas City. For participants without direct deposit who receive payment by check, the U.S. Treasury will issue the payment and delays will be expected up to 7 days. Participants will no longer be notified by the local office when payments are issued.

Ensure Benefits Are Received

To ensure eligibility for USDA program benefits, please ensure you are consistent in the way you are presenting your operation to all USDA agencies including NRCS, Risk Management Agency (crop insurance), and FSA. 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.

Mixed Grain/Hay Loan or 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 a farm-stored loan or LDP is applied for, 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 the commodity is seeded at the full rate and the commodity is reported as the intended use for grain or forage. The County Committee may require documentation to support the seeding rate.



New Loan Interest Rate In Effect

The interest rate for marketing assistance grain loans changed at the beginning of 2009. The interest rate is 1.625%. This rate will stay in effect on any current loan until the loan is paid in full.

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to participate in FSA programs should contact Nina Fonk, 790 Colleen Street, Helena MT 59601, (406) 449-5000, nina.fonk@mt.usda.gov.

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various crops harvested in 2008
May 15 – Beginning date of Primary Nesting Season
June 1 – 2009 DCP signup ends

New ACRE Program

The ACRE program is a new program under the 2008 Farm Bill. Beginning in 2009 producers can sign-up for this revenue-based counter-cyclical program. Producers may elect ACRE any crop year 2009-2012. Upon electing ACRE, the farm is committed to ACRE for the remainder of the 2008 Farm Bill, through 2012. After enrollment in ACRE, direct DCP payments are derived from 80 percent of the base payment rate, and marketing assistance loan benefits (and LDPs) are based on 70 percent of the loan rate.

The ACRE program provides revenue protection for producers based on market prices and average yields for covered commodities, such as wheat, barley, oats, corn, oilseeds, lentils, dry peas, and chickpeas. The guarantee is based on state-level yields and national market prices. Payments are based on state- and farm-level yields and national market prices. Therefore, ACRE payments are issued at the end of the marketing year, which is one year following the end of the crop year.

Some of the special requirements of the ACRE program include, reports of actual production for the previous five years and current crop year, reports of date(s) of harvest, low yield or prevented planting must be reported within 15 calendar days of loss being apparent, a timely crop appraisal is required if a crop will not be harvested.

Computer software for ACRE signup is expected to arrive sometime in April and the signup deadline for 2009 ACRE is June 1, 2009.