

Park County FSA Office
5242 Hwy 89 S
Livingston, MT 59047
(406) 222-0212 Ext. 2
(406) 222-8538 Fax

County Committee:

Steve Libsack, Chairperson
Sue Pinkerton, Vice-chair
Mike Fitzpatrick, Member

FSA Office Personnel:

Bob Broyles, CED
Bill Ballard, FLM
Jodi Isaly, PT

Dates to Remember:

May 15-July 15 – FSA State Committee established Primary Nesting Season for CRP

May 15-August 1 – Primary Nesting Season for CRP contracts affected by the National Wildlife Federations settlement agreement with FSA

June 2 – Final loan/LDP availability date for Corn, Dry peas, Grain sorghum, Lentils, Mustard seed, Safflower seed, Small chickpeas, Soybeans, and Sunflower seed harvested in 2007

June 15 – COC Nominations Open

Notice of Loss – filed within 15 calendar days of the natural disaster occurrence or the date the damage to the crop or loss of production was apparent

July 15 – deadline to provide 2007 production for NAP APH

July 15 – 2007 NAP Application for Payment Deadline

July 15 – Acreage report deadline

August 1 – Deadline for reconstitutions

September 30 – October 1 – Women Stepping Forward for Agriculture Symposium, Billings



Park County News

May 2008

Responsibilities for CRP Contract Holders

CRP contract holders have certain responsibilities for carrying out the terms and conditions of the CRP contract. Those include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ Control all weeds, insects, pests and other undesirable species to the extent necessary to ensure that the establishment and maintenance of the approved cover is adequately protected and there is no adverse impact on surrounding land.
- ✓ Establish and maintain the required vegetative or water cover and other required practices.
- ✓ No activity may be conducted on CRP acres without authorization.
- ✓ Prior approval must be received from FSA before any harvesting, grazing or other commercial use of the forage may begin.
- ✓ If land with a CRP contract is sold, the new owners should notify the local county FSA office if they want to continue the contract.

If CRP land is sold and the new owner does not wish to continue the CRP contract, the previous CRP participant will be required to repay all payments received on the contract plus interest and liquidated damages. Liquidated damages are equal to 25 percent of the annual rental payment on those acres not contracted by the new owner.

NOTE: There are two primary nesting Dates

May 15 – July 15 *FSA State Committee established Primary Nesting Season for CRP*

May 15 – August 1 *Primary Nesting Season for CRP contracts affected by the National Wildlife Federations settlement agreement with FSA*

Check the Conservation Plan of Operations (CPO) for the primary nesting dates that apply to your CRP contract

CRP Maintenance Incentives

When the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) was originally announced a \$5/year maintenance rate was added to the contract to maintain the cover. In 2006, that rate was lowered to \$4/year. As of April 11, 2008 that rate has been lowered to \$2/year. The new rate does not affect any contracts previously approved and only applies to contracts approved after April 11, 2008.

Producers are required to perform management activities included in all contracts approved after May, 2003. These activities are eligible for cost-share assistance. Please contact the office if you have questions regarding your CRP contract.

CRP Management Activities

Beginning with CRP Signup 26 and Continuous CRP Signup 27, all new CRP contracts were required to have a management activity included in the Conservation Plan of Operations (CPO). Management activities must be completed before the end of year 6 for 10 year contracts and before the end of year 9 for 15 year contracts.

Management activities include:

- Residue Management
- Ground Disturbing
- Interseeding Legumes
- Fabric Management
- Fertilization
- Prescribed Burn

2008 Managed Grazing Periods

The Farm Service Agency State Committee has approved two 60-day managed grazing periods for Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres for 2008.

- Spring managed grazing can occur March 15th – May 14th
- Summer managed grazing can occur July 16th through September 13th

Since only two grazing periods are allowed, producers who can not begin grazing until August 2nd due to the NWF settlement will only be allowed to graze through September 13th.

Loan & LDP Final Availability Dates

Loans and LDP's are available to eligible producers who have:

- ❖ Reported acreage of the crop for which a loan or LDP is requested.
- ❖ Complied with all other program provisions

Request for loans and LDP's shall be made on or before the final availability date. Following are the final availability dates for crops harvested in 2007 for eligible grains, oilseeds, pulse crops, wool & mohair and honey:

Commodity	Availability Date
Corn, Grain sorghum, Mustard seed, Safflower seed, Soybeans, Sunflower seed, Dry peas, Lentils and Small chickpeas	May 31, 2008
Wool/mohair for wool/mohair clipped in calendar year 2008	January 31, 2009

2008 Crop Reports

Map packets and appointment schedules have recently been mailed out. You will receive a colored set to keep and a black and white set to complete and submit to FSA for reporting purposes. If you did not receive a set of maps, please contact the office. All acreage reports need to be filed by the final reporting date of July 15, 2008. Certification is mandatory if any of the following apply:

- ◆ You receive DCP payments
- ◆ You have acres enrolled in CRP
- ◆ Loans or LDP's will be requested; including Wool, Mohair and Honey (All cropland on the farm must be certified to be eligible for *DCP and loan program benefits*).
- ◆ Acreage is covered by NAP

Failure to report accurately may result in loss of program and price support benefits.

COC Election Approaching

Beginning **June 15, 2008**, nominations are being accepted for candidates for County Committee (COC) positions. A county or area served by the COC is divided into local administrative areas (LAA). Each LAA is represented by one member on the county committee. Only one LAA holds an election each year. This year the election will be held in LAA #2, which is currently represented by Mike Fitzpatrick. If you wish to nominate someone (including yourself), nomination forms are available at the county office or by logging on to the Montana FSA website at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt>. The nominee must be in LAA #2 and sign the nomination form in order to be valid.

Please remember that as a county committee member you are the local voice of how FSA programs are administered to meet your local community and resource needs. Nomination forms must be submitted to the FSA county office by **August 1, 2008**. Ballots will be sent to eligible voters beginning November 3, 2008. The final day for voters to submit their voted ballots is December 1, 2008.

Measurement Service Charges

On farm measurement is charged at:

- Basic farm fee of \$30.00;
- Plus an hourly rate of \$16.00 for the first hour and \$8.00 for each additional ½ hour after the first hour. The minimum is 1 hour.

The hourly rate includes the time to travel from the FSA county office to the farm, complete the measurement service and return to the county office.

An "Initial Fee" is required at the time the measurement service is requested and the fee must be collected before the measurement service is performed. The initial fee will be the basic rate plus the hourly minimum. Once the service has been completed the actual fee will be calculated. The initial fee will be subtracted from the calculated fee and a letter will be sent informing you of the additional amount owed. If the amount is \$9.99 or less then an additional fee is not required.

Measurement Service Charges (cont.)

In-office measurements are charged at:

- a basic farm rate of \$15.00 plus a 30-minute minimum rate of \$8.00.

Bin site measurements will be calculated according to the farm number and the physical location of the bins:

- for one farm with multiple bin sites, only one FSA-409 (a written request to have acreage measured by FSA) is required;
- for multiple farms and all the grain is stored in bins at one site, only one FSA-409 is required where the bin site is physically located;
- for multiple farms with a different bin site for each farm, a separate FSA-409 is required for each farm and bin site.

DCP Fruit and Vegetable Plantings

The 2008 Farm Bill has currently not been passed. FSA cannot predict the final terms of what Congress will adapt, however, to ensure compliance with pending farm bill proposals, producers with plans of planting fruit and vegetables (FAV's) in 2008 need to be aware of planting restrictions. These restrictions were applied to base acreage during the 2002 Farm Bill. Please contact the county office for a list of FAV restricted crops. When planting FAV's, producers had the following options:

1. Plant FAV's on a participating farm's "free acres".
2. Plant FAV's on base acreage of a participating farm that has a farm FAV history and takes an acre-for-acre reduction in the DCP payment. NOTE: Farm FAV history is based on the FAV planting history for 1991-1995 or 1998-2001.
3. Plant FAV's on base acreage of a participating farm without farm FAV history, using the producer's FAV history and takes an acre-for-acre reduction in DCP payment. NOTE: Producer FAV history is based on the planting history the producer has of each specific FAV crop.
4. Plant FAV's on a nonparticipating farm.

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Important Dates to Remember

**May 31 – Final loan availability date for various crops
June 15 – COC nominations open
Notice of Loss – 15 calendar days of the natural disaster occurrence or the date the damage to the crop or loss of production was apparent
July 15 – Acreage report deadline
August 1 – Reconstitution Deadline**

2005-2007 Crop Disaster Program (CDP)

No signup deadline has been established yet for the CDP program covering production losses on 2005 – 2007 crops. This program covers losses exceeding 35% on crop that were covered by either crop insurance or the NAP program offered through FSA. If you feel you have eligible losses, contact the office for additional details or for an appointment to process your application. Signup for benefits under the quality loss portion of the program has not been set yet.

Conservation Compliance

Federal regulations discourage the production of crops on highly erodible cropland unless the land is protected from erosion by an approved conservation system. Status reviews are conducted to ensure producers follow a conservation plan on highly erodible land.

In addition to the highly erodible land, a person may not plant an agricultural commodity on wetlands converted after Dec. 23, 1985, or convert a wetland to make agricultural production possible after Nov. 28, 1990.

Failure to comply with these provisions will cause a person to be ineligible for USDA benefits. County Committees may review noncompliance situations for good faith and provide relief in approved cases.