



**November 2011**

**Polk County  
FSA Office**

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**Office Hours**  
Monday - Friday  
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**Polk County Staff**

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Our farm loan staff can be contacted at (503) 399-5741 Ext.2

**County Committee:**  
Tom Crawford, Chairperson

Donal MacCarthy, Vice Chairperson

Kirk Fast, Member

Sandy Moritz, Advisor

**Oregon FSA Website:**  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/or](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/or)

## Farewell from Laurie Johnson

“As of November 30th I will be officially retired from the Farm Service Agency. It has been a real pleasure working with Polk County Producers these past years. I will miss my conversations with you all whether it was about FSA programs or just talking about sports, new fire halls, etc.” -Laurie Johnson

If you wish to say goodbye, please feel free to stop by the office or give her a call at (503) 623-2396 ext. 102 by November 30th!

## Committee Voting Begins

Ballots for this year’s county committee election were mailed to eligible voters on Nov. 4, 2011. Voters must complete their ballots and return them to the Farm Service Agency county office by the close of business on Dec. 5, 2011. If mailed, ballots must be postmarked by midnight Dec. 5, 2011.

We received one candidate this election year: Michael Atherton is nominated in LAA #3, West Polk County, to serve as a committee member. Atherton resides in Dallas, OR and has produced sheep and cattle for around 30 years.

Write-in candidates are also permitted on the ballot. Eligible voters in local administrative area 3 who have not received a ballot should contact the FSA county office staff.

**Voter Requirements** - Persons meeting requirements in 1 or 2, plus 3, below, are eligible to vote:

1. Legal voting age and have an interest in a farm or ranch as any of the following: an individual, an authorized representative of an entity, spouses when property is owned jointly or in community property states.
2. Not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations on an entire farm.
3. Participates or cooperates in any FSA program that is provided by law.

**Discrimination Prohibited** No person shall be denied the right to vote because of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation or marital or family status.

## Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE)

The sign-up for 2010 losses begins **Nov. 14, 2011** and will end **June 1, 2012**.

The Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disasters that occurred in the crop year 2010. SURE is available to eligible producers on:

- Farms in counties with Secretarial disaster declarations, including contiguous counties that have incurred at least a 10% crop production or quality loss, or both. All economically significant crops grown by a producer are eligible, **except** grazed crops.
- Any farm in which disaster-related conditions reduced the actual crop year production on the farm to 50 percent or less than normal production of the farm.

## Online Services

Producers with Internet access can fill out a variety of FSA forms online. Producers can also register for secure electronic access that will allow them to electronically sign and transmit some forms directly to the county office staff. If you are new to the website, first you will want to obtain a Level 2 USDA Service Center Customer ID and password at: <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/> and then click on "Create an Account Page" link.

If you already have a Customer ID and password, then click on the following eForms website at: <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/mainervlet> and then click on the "Sign In" button. A disclaimer window will open and after you read the "Warning message" click on the "Continue" button.

Then the USDA Web services page will open to the eAuthentication login page. Enter your login User ID and password and then click on the "Login" button. To sign and transmit forms electronically, you must sign-up and get a User ID and password.

**NOTICE  
TO HISPANIC  
AND/OR  
WOMEN  
FARMERS OR  
RANCHERS  
COMPENSATION  
FOR CLAIMS OF  
DISCRIMINATION**

If you believe that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) improperly denied farm loan benefits to you between 1981 and 2000 because you are Hispanic, or because you are female, you may be eligible to apply for compensation.

To register your name to receive a claims packet, call the Farmer and Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429 or visit: [www.farmerclaims.gov](http://www.farmerclaims.gov)

The claims package will have detailed information about the eligibility and claims process.



USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## Adjusted Gross Income Report to IRS – Act Now

Producers should remember they must submit an Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) verification consent form (CCC-931) to maintain eligibility for 2010 and 2011 program benefits. Individuals and legal entities now are using one form: CCC-931 Average Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) Certification and Consent to Disclosure of Tax Information.

The consent form authorizes IRS to verify that a producer's AGI is within the requirements for FSA programs eligibility. Producers who failed to file these forms before Sept. 2011 will receive a final notice from the National Office. This notice will give the producer a final opportunity to submit the CCC-931 prior to becoming ineligible for all program payments (with the exception of some earlier multi-year CRP contracts.) The letter will provide instruction on where the completed form must be sent.

IRS requires written consent from all individuals or legal entities before verification of AGI eligibility can be provided to USDA. For more information contact your local FSA office.

## 2012 DCP/ACRE Signup

2012 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) enrollment begins Jan. 23, 2012 and ends June 1, 2012.

Here are IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

- 1) All producers planting on **DCP base** acres must be identified on the DCP/ACRE contract and receive a proportionate share of DCP/ACRE payment for the farm.
- 2) Changes on the farm after enrolling June 1<sup>st</sup> in DCP/ACRE **must** be reported to your local FSA office such as:
  - Ownership changes
  - Producer changes (Individuals and Entities)
  - Change in crop shares arrangements
- 3) Changes cannot be made after Sept. 30, 2012.

**Note:** There will be no advance payments for 2012.

## Loans for the Socially Disadvantaged

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. Funds are available for operating loans and to purchase or improve farms or ranches (ownership loans.)

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, the FSA has provided priority funding for members of socially disadvantaged applicants.

A socially disadvantaged applicant is someone who has been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as a member of a group, without regard to his or her individual qualities.

For purposes of this program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

## CREP & Continuous CRP Available

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) allows farmers and ranchers to voluntarily enroll environmentally sensitive land into a program that decreases erosion, restores wildlife habitat and safeguards ground and surface water. CREP is a partnership with the federal government and the State of Oregon and covers all areas of the state.

Environmentally sensitive acreage qualifying for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) or Continuous CRP will be eligible for annual rental payments and cost-share of up to 50 percent from FSA and 25 percent from the State of Oregon on approved practices. These programs will remain funded, and continue to provide heightened environmental benefits on select areas.

Contact your local office or riparian technician for more information.



## Hispanic and Women Farmers

A process to resolve the claims of Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who believe they were discriminated against when seeking USDA farm loans has been established.

If you believe that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) improperly denied farm loan benefits to you between 1981 and 2000 because you are Hispanic or because you are female, you may be eligible to apply for compensation.

For additional information on this and other settlement issues contact:

### Hispanic and Women Farmer Claims Process:

[www.farmerclaims.gov](http://www.farmerclaims.gov) or call  
1-888-508-4429

### Pigford – The Black Farmers Discrimination Litigation:

[www.blackfarmercase.com](http://www.blackfarmercase.com) or call  
1-866-950-5547

### Keepseagle - The Native American Farmers Class Action Settlement:

[www.IndianFarmClass.com](http://www.IndianFarmClass.com) or call  
1-888-233-5506

## Marketing Assistance Loans

Marketing Assistance loans are commodity loans available to producers who share in the risk of producing the crop. To be eligible, you must maintain beneficial interest in the crop through the time of application. Beneficial interest means retaining the ability to make decisions about the commodity, maintaining responsibility for loss or damage to the commodity, and maintaining title to the commodity. Once beneficial interest in the commodity is lost, the commodity is ineligible for a loan.

Commodity loan eligibility also requires compliance with conservation and wetland protection requirements; reporting use of cropland acreage on the farm and ensuring that the commodity meets CCC minimum grade and quality standards. For commodities to be eligible they must have been produced by an eligible producer, and exist in a storable and merchantable condition for food, feed or other uses as determined by CCC. The quality of the commodity in farm storage must be maintained throughout the term of the loan. Producers do not have to participate in the Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program to be eligible for commodity loans.

Violating provisions of a marketing assistance loan may trigger administrative actions, such as assessing liquidated damages, calling the loan and denial of future farm-stored loans.

The most common violations are removing or disposing of a commodity being used as loan collateral without prior authorization and providing an incorrect quantity certification.

Eligible commodities include: wheat, field corn (including silage), barley, oats, honey, flax seed, mustard seed, rape seed, safflower, soybeans, sunflower seed, crambe and whole dry peas (smooth green, smooth yellow, wrinkled, winter field, mixed dry & miscellaneous.)

## Unauthorized Disposition of Grain or Other Commodity

If grain or any commodity under loan has been disposed of through feeding, selling or any other form of disposal without prior written authorization from the county office staff, it is considered unauthorized disposition. The financial penalties for unauthorized dispositions are severe and a producer's name is placed on a loan violation list for a two-year period. Always call to check for restrictions before you haul any commodity under loan.

## Native American Farmers and Ranchers

The claims process is open until December 27, 2011 for Native American farmers and ranchers who believe they are entitled to funds under the Keepseagle settlement. Claims packets must be completed and submitted by December 27, 2011 to have a chance to receive a cash payment or loan forgiveness.

Claimant services representatives can be reached through the Keepseagle claims website: <http://www.indianfarmclass.com> or through calling 888-233-5506. Claimants must register for a claims package (by calling or visiting the website) and the claims package will be mailed to the claimants.

## Get Your FSA Records Up to Date Now

Now is the time to get your land records updated at the local FSA office before any contracting starts for 2012. If you have picked up new ground, dropped a lease or if you have purchased or sold ground, please let the office know so we can update the files. If you have purchased, bring a copy of the deed or tax records; if new ground bring the lease or have the owner give the office a call.

Do you farm in more than one county and would like your records transferred to one county for ease of administration? Get that started now as well. Your owner(s) must agree to the transfer, so don't wait until you want to sign your contracts or do an acreage report.



## Retirement News/Staff Changes

As stated on the first page of this newsletter, one of your Polk County Office Program Technicians, Laurie Johnson, will be retiring November 30th, 2011. Congratulations Laurie for your years of hard work, dedication and excellent customer service that you have provided the Farm Service Agency! Feel free to stop by or call in to wish her farewell! Polk County FSA will not be hiring to fill the position due to our limited budget.



## Changing Banks

Almost all Farm Service Agency payments are made electronically using Direct Deposit.

To maintain efficient payment processing, it is critical to keep the county office staff up to date on changes you might make with your financial institutions.

If you have made changes to accounts or have changed banking institutions, these changes might affect the direct deposit of your FSA payments. When changes like these are made, be sure to contact the FSA county office so we can update our records to ensure efficient and uninterrupted service.

Selected Interest Rates - Nov. 2011	
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%
Farm Operating - Direct	1.375
Farm Ownership - Direct	3.750%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.500%
Emergency Loans	3.750%
Farm Storage Facility	1.5%-2.25%
Commodity Loans	1.125%

Dates to Remember	
November	Native American Heritage Month
11/11/2011	Veterans' Day Holiday - Office Closed
11/14/2011	2010 SURE Sign-up Begins
11/21/2011	NAP Sales closing date for Perennial crops and honey
11/24/2011	Thanksgiving Day Holiday - Office Closed
12/05/2011	Deadline to return or postmark COC Election Ballots

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all of its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call toll-free at (866) 632-9992 (English) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (English Federal-relay) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Federal-relay). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.