

Ravalli County FSA Office
1709 North 1st Street
Hamilton, MT 59840

The Ravalli County Committee regular scheduled meeting is the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

County Committee Members

Tony Coller, Chair
Hans McPherson, Vice Chair
Ted Heiland, Member
Julie Schram, Minority Advisor

FSA Office Personnel

Coral Maxwell, Prog Tech
Mary Jane Mohn, Prog Tech
Curt Anderson, CED

Dates to Remember:

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 4 – Holiday – Office Closed
July 15 – deadline to provide 2007 production for NAP APH
July 15 – 2007 NAP Application for Payment Deadline
July 15 – Acreage report deadline
July 18 –LCP Deadline
August 1 – Deadline for recons
September 1 – Holiday – Office Closed
September 30 – October 1 – Women Stepping Forward for Agriculture Symposium, Billings

Links:

<http://www.usda.gov>
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/MT>
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt/>
<http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov>
<http://www.dnrc.state.mt.us/>
<http://extn.msu.montana.edu>
<http://www.bitterrootcd.org/>
<http://bitterrootconservationdistrict.net/>



LCP Signup Deadline Announced

The deadline to sign up for the 2005-2007 Livestock Compensation Program (LCP) has been set for July 18, 2008. LCP provides payments to eligible livestock owners and cash lessees who suffered feed losses or increased feed costs because of a natural disaster. Ravalli County livestock producers are eligible for the 2007 LCP program. To begin the application process for the LCP program, producers need to supply the county office with the following information:

- ✓ Verifiable livestock inventory numbers from 1/1/07
Some examples of verifiable proof: (State of MT Livestock Tax Assessment/Vet Records /Bank or other Loan Papers/Calf Sales)
- ✓ Receipts for all livestock sales from 1/1/07 through 5/1/07
- ✓ Non-Irrigated Pastures grazed by livestock – for leased ground, copies of leases are required. (Most federal and state leases are eligible)
- ✓ Excess feed costs (if any) in 2007, as compared to 2006. Some examples of verifiable proof: (Tax documents and signed receipts)
- ✓ Percent grazing loss suffered in 2007

The LCP program figures 2 separate values, one for your livestock and the other for your pasture and excess feed cost combined. You are subsequently paid on the smaller of the 2 values. **Even if all of your pasture is irrigated ground you might qualify for a payment if you spent more for livestock feed in 2007 than in 2006.**

CDP Quantity payments

Signup for the quantity (production loss) loss portion of the 2005/2007 Crop Disaster Program (CDP) began October 15, 2007 and continues. Although no ending signup date has been announced, we encourage all producers who have not yet signed up for CDP to do so as soon as possible. Payments will be delayed on all CDP production loss applications that are not approved and paid prior to receipt of the Quality loss software, which is expected to be issued around June 20, 2008. Signup dates for quality loss CDP applications will be announced in the near future.

COC Election Approaching

Beginning **June 16, 2008**, nominations are being accepted for candidates for County Committee (COC) positions. A county 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 LAA open in *Ravalli County* is LAA2 – Willoughby Lane south to Hamilton Heights. Nomination forms (FSA669A) are available at the county office or online at: <http://intra3.fsa.usda.gov/dam/ffasforms/currentforms.asp>. Nomination forms are due back to the county office by August 1, 2008. The nominee must sign the nomination form in order to be nominated as a COC member.

Women Stepping Forward for Agriculture Symposium

Mark your calendars for the annual Women Stepping Forward for Agriculture Symposium to be held September 30 & October 1 at the Clock Tower Inn in Billings, Montana.

A great slate of topics will be discussed such as Dispelling Agriculture Myths from the American Farm Bureau, a panel discussion from the congressional staffers, source water protection and farm-to-table. Ed Usset from the Minnesota Center for Farm Financial Management will be presenting "Grain Marketing is Simple." These are just a few of the topics, presentations, and activities that will occur during the two day event. Cost of registration is \$60 which includes meals and presentations.

The symposium will begin at 8:00 a.m. on September 30 with registration and end on October 1 at 2:00 p.m. Continue to watch the newsletter for further details.

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.

Changes to Your Farming Operation

To ensure a smooth transition when a new Farm Bill is passed, FSA is encouraging producers to notify us of any changes to your farming operation including land ownership or lease changes, entity changes including members and shares, and who is authorized to sign documents for the operation or individuals. It is anticipated there will be policy changes and new forms to complete when new programs are implemented. Details will be published in this newsletter as they are known.

The Improper Payments Information Act of 2002 (IPEA) implemented stronger internal controls and reviews of payments issued. **The FSA database of payments issued will be compared against the Social Security Administration (SSA) database of deceased individuals.** It is very important that FSA be notified of the death of a landowner, member of an entity, or anyone that may be earning USDA benefits. There are actions that can be taken to ensure payments are issued correctly and not considered an overpayment. Contact your local office for more information.

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 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 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.

How Safe is Your Water Well?

Private water well owners have a responsibility to protect ground water from contamination and ensure their water system is providing good quality drinking water. Conducting an annual well check-up should be taken to ensure the proper operation of your well. A check-up will allow you to monitor water quality and extend the life of your system.

As a minimum, test your water annually for coliform bacteria and nitrates. Tests can also be conducted for contaminants specific to your area. Your water should be tested if there is a change in the water's taste, odor, or appearance; after the well system is serviced; or after a flooding event.

Inspect the well parts to ensure they are in good repair. The well should have a two-part cap with a rubber seal, if it does not, the cap should be replaced. Inspect your pressure tank and associated plumbing.

Check the area around the well for hazardous materials such as paint, cleaning supplies, motor oil, and pet waste. Never dump hazardous materials on your property or pour them down the drain. Dispose of old or unwanted prescription drugs and other medications by removing them from their original containers, mix them with coffee grounds or kitty litter, put them into another container, and throw them into the trash. Although these are the best disposal methods now, they are not ideal. Some local pharmacies have unwanted drug take back programs.

Information on collecting samples can be provided by your water quality district, county sanitarian, or the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). You may also contact Taylor Greenup, Montana Watershed Coordination Council at 406/444-3527 or DEQ's Source Water Protection Program at 406/444-1595 or by logging on to <http://deq.mt.gov/wqinfo/swp>.

Filing a Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Notice-of-Loss

To qualify for assistance under NAP, production losses must have occurred as a result of an eligible cause of loss. An eligible cause of loss is any of the following:

- damaging weather, such as drought, freeze, hail, excessive moisture, or excessive wind; or
- adverse natural occurrences, such as earthquake or flood; or
- a condition related to damaging weather or an adverse natural occurrence, such as excessive heat, disease or insect infestation.

Wildlife damage and weeds are **not** considered eligible causes of loss under NAP. A notice of loss must be provided within 15 calendar days after the:

- disaster occurrence or date damage to the specific crop acreage is apparent to the producer for yield losses;
- final planting date for prevented planting.

Direct TV Transition

On February 17, 2009 all full-power television stations in the United States will stop broadcasting in analog and switch to 100 percent digital broadcasting. Digital broadcasting promises to provide a clearer picture and more programming options and will free up airwaves for use by emergency responders. This will require all analog TV's to be converted to digital.

Congress has created the TV Converter Box Coupon Program for households wishing to keep using their analog TV sets after February 17, 2009. The Program allows U.S. households to obtain up to two coupons, each worth \$40 that can be applied toward the cost of eligible converter boxes. A TV connected to cable, satellite or other pay TV service does not require a TV converter box from this program.

Please log on to the Montana FSA website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt> and click on the website for the HDTV \$40 coupon offer to apply for a coupon or learn more about the program.

Ravalli County FSA

1709 N 1st Street
Hamilton, MT 59840

PRESORT STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BOZEMAN, MT 59715
PERMIT #54

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."

Map Packets

Map packets have recently been sent out to most producers. If you haven't received a packet in the mail, and you would like to report your acres or have reported you acres in the last few years; please contact the office and request a packet. The deadline to report your acres is July 15th. (Programs that require you to report your acres include: DCP, LDP's, MILC, NAP and CRP)

2007 Census of Agriculture

It is not too late to turn in your Census of Agriculture. USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) wants everyone who received a census form to return the form or call NASS toll free at 1-888-424-7828. Even if you are a landlord or have a few chickens or a horse, NASS wants to account for your form. Your information can be taken over the phone by calling the toll-free number.

For further information contact the Montana Ag Statistics Service at 1-800-835-2612.