

Rosebud County FSA Office
P.O. Box 6
Forsyth, MT 59327
(406) 346-7333

Rosebud County Staff

Lance Wasson – County Executive Director
Diane Wyrick – Program Technician
Debbie Van Hemelryck – Program Technician
Christy Bierlein – Program Technician
Glen Leonhardt – Field Assistant
Jeff Janshen – Farm Loan Manager, in the
Custer County FSA Office at (406) 232-7905
Bill Ballard – Farm Loan Manager, in the
Yellowstone Co. FSA Office at (406) 657- 6135

2007 County Committee

Johnna Newman Robert Sorenson
Sheryl Lawrence

Treasure County FSA Office
P.O. Box 146
Hysham, MT 59038
(406) 342-5551

Treasure County Staff

Lance Wasson – County Executive Director
Sharolyn McPhail – Program Technician
Debbie Van Hemelryck – Program Technician
Jeff Janshen – Farm Loan Manager, in the
Custer County FSA Office at (406) 232-7905
Bill Ballard – Farm Loan Manager, in the
Yellowstone Co. FSA Office at (406) 657- 6135

2007 County Committee

Ardell Trusty Doug Stephenson
Elaine Arneson

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Reasonable Accommodation Statement:

"Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in any FSA programs should contact Lance A. Wasson, CED, PO Box 6, Forsyth, MT 59327 at 406-346-7333 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339."



Rosebud/Treasure FSA News

February, 2007

FSA Plans to Reorganize

In the next few weeks, FSA in Montana will submit a final plan to the national FSA headquarters in Washington D.C. for their review and acceptance for shifting the way FSA does business across Montana. The plan includes:

- The closure of seven FSA offices across Montana including Lewis and Clark, Meagher, Park, Ravalli, Sanders, Sweet Grass, and **Treasure**. These offices will be consolidated with neighboring counties. Producers served by an office which is closed will have the choice to do business with any office in a contiguous county.
- Re-distribution of staff to be placed in offices where workload is the highest. The consolidation of offices will increase staffing levels of employees statewide.
- Employee retention. No FSA employee will be forced out of employment due to a consolidation action. In the seven offices targeted for closure, there are ten employees affected. All employees will be offered employment in the receiving office of the closure.
- Increased utilization of technology capabilities. To reduce producer visits to FSA offices: 1) toll-free phone numbers will be utilized; 2) increased opportunities for clients to do business remotely through mail, fax, e-mail or web-based applications will be made available; and 3) a periodic presence in strategic locations in closed counties such as informational meetings, application sign-up meetings, and FSA office days will be provided.
- A commitment to providing increased producer education of programs administered by FSA and what is needed to receive benefits from those programs. Increased education will reduce the amount of time clients spend applying for program benefits at their local FSA office.

After review and concurrence by the FSA national headquarters, the Appropriations and Agricultural Committees of both the US House of Representatives and the US Senate will be notified of the plan. Concurrently with that notification process, public meetings will be held in those communities affected by the office closures. A final decision will then be made on the plan and implementation will begin.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

NAP provides financial assistance to producers of noninsurable crops when low yields occur as a result of natural disaster. Eligible crops are those commercially produced for food, livestock consumption, and some specialty crops. Eligible producers must pay an administrative service fee of \$100 per crop per administrative county or \$300 per producer per county, not to exceed \$900 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties. Service fees may be waived for limited-resource producers. **Payment of a service fee does not guarantee coverage.** There are many eligibility requirements that must be met. ***The Application Closing Date for all crops except value loss and honey is March 15, 2007.*** Contact the office for further information.

Common Payment Limitations

Every FSA program has an established payment limitation that applies to all farming operations. A limitation on the total annual payments that a "person" may receive from federal agricultural programs has been in effect since the Agricultural Act of 1970. Depending on your financial arrangements regarding borrowed capital, it may affect payment limitation determinations and result in ineligibility.

Details for each program's payment limitation may be obtained at the County Office.

NAP Pull Off

Each FSA County Committee determines the date when livestock must be removed from NAP forage acres each spring. The date determined in **Rosebud County is April 15, 2007.** The date determined in **Treasure County is April 1, 2007.** The pull off date for crops intended for grass seed is April 1 in **all** counties.



1099-G Mailed from Kansas City

During the last week of January, producers who have received payments from FSA should have also received a CCC-1099-G from the Kansas City office. A CCC-1099-G is a report to the Internal Revenue Service about FSA payments made to you in calendar year 2006. The CCC-1099-G is a service to help participating producers report taxable income. It is not intended to replace the program participant's responsibility to report income to the IRS.

If you received a CCC-1099-G, we recommend that you check the amounts shown with those in your records to see that the amounts are correct. Refunds will no longer be reported on the 1099-G, but will be available online from the FSA Financial Inquiries (FSA-FI) web-based database. Program participants with eAuthentication user ID's and passwords can access their refund information at FSA-FI and select "Inquiry Type 1099/Refund Reports". Refund amounts are displayed on the Producer's Year-to-Date Activity web page.

If you have a question concerning the 1099-G refund information, you may contact the county office for assistance locating the correct payment data. If you choose to visit the office, bring your CCC-1099-G with you.



Mark your Calendars

Women Stepping Forward for Agriculture
Symposium

October 2 & 3, 2007

Dillon, MT

GRAZE-OUT Application Period Ends March 31

The 2002 Farm Bill provides GRAZE-OUT payments instead of loan deficiency payments (LDPs) for 2002 through 2007 crop years to eligible producers who:

- Elect to use acreage planted to wheat, barley, oats, or triticale, for the grazing by livestock, and;
- Agree to forgo any other harvesting of the commodity on this acreage during the applicable crop year.

The application period for GRAZE-OUT begins the first day of mechanical harvest as determined by the local County Committee and ends on March 31 of the calendar year following the year the crop is normally harvested.

Local county committees are responsible for determining the beginning harvest date in the county for wheat, barley, oats, and triticale.

Provider Pals

Every single person in the US relies upon someone providing the products of food, clothing and shelter from the earth. More than 80 percent of the US population is now living in urban areas, so often the processes of food production and the cultures built upon a heritage of production are often out of the sight and mind of the majority of consumers.

Bruce Vincent, a logger from Libby, has developed an exciting educational program that encourages people to discuss their cultural realities, embrace their differences, and celebrate their similarities. It uses a unique, yet practical approach to natural resource education along with a series of student exchanges to accomplish this worthwhile task.

To learn more about how you can help by providing students scholarships, sponsoring a classroom or school, or becoming the next Provider Pal, logon to the website at <http://www.providerpals.com>

Honey Loans Available

Marketing assistance loans and loan deficiency payments for 2006 crop year honey are available until March 31, 2007. The national loan rate for honey is \$0.60 per pound. Market prices currently exceed the loan rate; so LDPs are not available right now.

To be eligible for a loan, the producer must have produced honey in the United States during the calendar year for which the loan is requested, and extracted the honey on or before Dec. 31 of the applicable crop year; have continuous beneficial interest in the honey through date of repayment of the loan; and been responsible for the financial risk of keeping the honey. Producers are responsible for maintaining the quality of farm-stored honey during the term of the loan.

The honey must be produced in the United States by an eligible producer, from an approved floral source, and stored in approved containers.

The containers must be marked with the producer's name, type of honey, number of container and net weight. Pre-loan inspections are required before the loans can be disbursed.

Honey used as collateral may not be disposed of without approval of the county office staff.

Summer Employment

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) – Plant Protection and Quarantine division is looking for temporary full time employees to work during the summer months. Two positions are available in Billings and Helena.

Duties may include placing and servicing insect traps; collecting insects with nets and by hand; visually surveying for grasshoppers and other pests; utilizing GPS units and gathering data; and maintaining and submitting accurate records.

Contact Joe Merenz at 406/449-5210 for further information.



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Important Dates to Remember

February 19 – Holiday – Office closed

March 15 – NAP sales closing date for all crops except value loss and honey

March 31 – Final loan/LDP availability date for various crops harvested in 2006

April 1 – Deadline for payment limitation changes

NAP pull-off dates – Treasure: April 1, 2007

Rosebud: April 15, 2007

DNRC Summer Youth Camps

Again this summer, the MT Department of Natural Resources and Conservation is hosting summer youth camps. Camp and contact information is as follows:

Montana Envirothon

April 23-24, 2007

Lewistown, MT

The **Envirothon** offers hand-on instruction and problem solving for environmentally concerned students. Sponsorship is available through your local conservation district.

Montana Range Days

June 18-20, 2007

Conrad, MT

Montana Range Days is an annual event that celebrates the importance of rangelands in Montana. Registration before June 1 is \$80/family or \$30/individual. Contact Kody Farkell at 406/278-7611 ext. 101 for further information.

Montana Natural Resources Youth Camp

July 22-27, 2007

Lubrecht State Forest

Campers attending the Montana Natural Resources Youth Camp spend one week at the Lubrecht State Forest east of Missoula learning about forestry, water, soils, geology, range, wildlife, recreation and having a lot of fun. Registration is \$175.00. Scholarships are available through your local conservation district.

Montana Youth Range Camp

July 23-27, 2007

Roundup, MT

Range Camp is a five-day program open to students ages 12-18. Registration is \$100. Sponsorship may be available through your local conservation district.

For complete camp information logon to

www.dnrc.mt.gov/cardd/camps/default.asp or by calling 406/444-6667