



December 2006

Skagit-Island-San Juan County FSA News

2006 ELECTION RESULTS

The results of the Area Committee election are as follows:

Local Administrative Area (LAA)#1 – Northwest Skagit County west of I-5 and north of Highway 20:

Mark Wesen – Member representative
Kristi Gundersen – 1st Alternate

Local Administrative Area (LAA)#4 – San Juan County:

M R Buffum Jr. – Member representative
Katherin Hover – 1st Alternate
Richard Civile – 2nd Alternate

The Skagit-Island-San Juan Area Committee and office staff wish to congratulate and welcome the newly elected members. The remaining committee members and office staff would like to thank Wendell Carlson and Don Burt Jr. for their service to the agricultural community as members of the Area Committee. They will be missed.

NEW STATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR WASHINGTON STATE FSA

USDA-Farm Service Agency (FSA) Administrator Teresa Lasseter recently announced the appointment of Jack Silzel as the State Executive Director for FSA in Washington State.

Prior to accepting the FSA appointment, Silzel served more than 10 years in Washington, D.C. as the agriculture policy director for former Congressman George Nethercutt, and legislative director for Congresswoman Cathy McMorris. He worked closely with House and Senate Agriculture Committee members and staff on issues surrounding re-authorization of the Farm Bill. He served nine years as senior advisor for agriculture and rural affairs, assisting House Appropriations Committee members.

A fourth-generation farmer, Silzel was actively involved in his family's diversified farm operation near Oakesdale, Washington where they produced wheat, barley, lentils, dry peas, Kentucky bluegrass turf seed and hogs prior to his congressional aid service. Jack Silzel replaces James Fitzgerald, who accepted a position with USDA Rural Development in Washington D.C. in July 2006.

IMPROPER PAYMENT INFORMATION ACT (IPIA) 2002

The Improper Payment Information Act (IPIA) 2002 reviews payments issued by Federal Agencies and determines if payments are being issued properly based on all forms being completed properly. During a recent review in a randomly selected number of counties nationwide it was determined that some forms were not completed in their entirety and that signatures were not correctly signed in some cases. Based on the results of this national review county offices have been mandated to review all documents on file in the county office for payments issued during fiscal year 2006 and determine if additional documentation is required to support producer signatures as well as determine if the eligibility forms were completed in their entirety.

In response to this mandate, county office staff will be reviewing files for producers who received payments during fiscal year 2006 to determine if proper signatures were taken and that all eligibility forms were completed accurately. Staff will be determining if proper signature authority is on file in addition to entity documentation. Any deficiencies found by staff will necessitate a letter being sent to the producer for signatures and/or documentation. This process will be quite time consuming and possibly tedious for you as the producers, as we are requiring you to take action if needed. Without the requested information from you there is a possibility that a refund of payments issued in fiscal year 2006 will be required. We, as the county office staff ask for your patience in this process and offer our appreciation to you for your help in this matter.

FARM STORAGE FACILITY LOAN PROGRAM

The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFLP) is a program where Commodity Credit Corporation provides low cost financing for producers to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities for eligible commodities. Eligible applicants may qualify for the 7-year loan program and may borrow up to \$100,000 per "person." A down payment of 15% is required and a non-refundable application fee of \$45 must be paid at the time of application. Loans may be made for purchasing and installing eligible storage facilities, permanently affixed drying or handling equipment, or remodeling existing facilities. The need for more storage capacity for your farming operation must be documented. Please contact the County Office for further information.

ACCESSIBILITY: Person with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in any meeting, event or function should contact the county office. FSA is committed to making programs accessible to all customers.

Skagit-Island-San Juan County FSA

2021 E. College Way, Ste 212
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
Office Phone: (360) 428-7758
Office Fax: (360) 424-6172

Office Hours

Monday – Friday
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

Area Committee

Kris Hansen, Chair
Wendell Carlson, V-Chair
Todd Gordon, Member
Wilbur Bishop, Member
Don Burt, Jr., Member

Office Staff

Ellen Medeiros, CED
June Freet, PT
Marlene Garber, PT

Next COC Meeting

Tuesday, January 16, 2006
8:30 AM in the USDA
Conference Room.

IMPORTANT DATES:

December 25, 2006 - Office closed in observance of Christmas

January 1 – Office closed for New Year's Day

January 15 – Office closed in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day

WEBSITES

National USDA website:
<http://www.usda.gov>
National FSA website:
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov>
Washington State FSA website:
<http://www.usda.gov/wa>



2007 DIRECT AND COUNTER-CYCLICAL PROGRAM (DCP) SIGN UPS

The sign up period for the 2007 crop year for the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) has begun. October 1, 2006 through June 1, 2007, producers may enroll in the DCP program on farms which have established bases without the cost of an administrative fee. After June 1, 2007 through September 20, 2007, producers may continue to enroll in DCP on their eligible farms with the cost of an administrative fee per farm.

Payments offered by DCP are as follows:

Direct Payments: Regardless of the price of commodities, direct payments will be issued annually on 85% of the crop acreage base times the payment yield. Direct payment rates include:

52 cents/bu for wheat
28 cents/bu for corn
24 cents/bu for barley

22% of the direct payments may be requested at the time of sign up.

Counter-Cyclical Payments: Counter-cyclical payments will be paid if market prices fall below certain levels during the 12-month marketing period for each commodity. Advance payments may be requested at the time of sign up.

Please contact the office to set up an appointment to enroll.

RURAL KIDS EARN AND LEARN ABOUT MONEY THROUGH YOUTH LOAN PROGRAM

The FSA youth-loan program is helping Washington kids finance 4-H, FFA, and other small projects, as they learn about managing money and running a business. Low-interest rate loans up to \$5,000 are available to rural kids from 10 to 20 years old. Youth loans can be used to finance any income-producing project. A youth needs a 4-H or FFA project leader to be a sponsor; FSA will help them put together a budget. Marketing, budgeting, paying bills, and repaying a loan are important life lessons that this program helps teach. The loan from FSA, an agency of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, is repaid when the project generates income and carries the same low interest rate as regular FSA borrowers. Parents usually don't have to co-sign, which makes the loan unique and they are available to kids in rural areas and towns of less than 10,000 people. Most projects are eligible, as long as they generate enough money to repay the loans. Past loans have been made for raising livestock and growing crops. However, loans are not limited to projects involved solely with production agriculture. Parents and others can contact the local FSA office to learn how to apply or obtain the application form.



and **HAPPY NEW YEAR**

From Jane, Marlene & Ellen