

March/April 2009 Umatilla Co. FSA



Umatilla County FSA Office
200 SE Hailey Ave, Suite 112
Pendleton, OR 97801

Telephone: (541) 278-8049 x 2
Facsimile: (541) 278-8048
Website: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/or/or.htm>



County Committee

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Bud Schmidtgall, Vice Chair
Dave Patton
Bob Walchli
Richard Kopp
Bette McLean, Advisor

Office Staff

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Tina Campbell, PT	Donella Smith, PT
Connie Carter, PT	Karie Walker, FLOT
Emma Lee Demianew, PT	Jessica Westberg, PT
Virginia Lundberg, FLT	Kevin Jordan, FLM

Office Hours

Monday – Friday
7:00am to 4:30pm

County Committee Meetings

3rd Thursday of the month

ACRE Program Enrollment Opens on April 27

Producers may elect and enroll in the Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program beginning April 27, 2009. This new option requires producers to review both DCP and ACRE programs and decide which one will work best for their operation. Only farms with a covered commodity may participate in the ACRE Program. Under the program, producers may receive revenue-based payments as an alternative to receiving price-based counter-cyclical (CC) payments. Producers have until Aug. 14, 2009, to make their decision for the 2009 crop. USDA will not accept any late-filed applications. Producers who elect the ACRE program for a farm agree to: forgo counter-cyclical payments, accept a 20-percent reduction of the direct payments, and accept a 30-percent reduction in loan rates for all commodities produced on the farm. Local commodities eligible for ACRE payments are wheat, corn, grain sorghum, barley, oats, soybeans, sunflower seed, canola, flaxseed, safflower, mustard seed, rapeseed, sesame seed, dry peas (dry edible or seed only), lentils, and chickpeas.

Producers may elect and enroll in ACRE for the 2009 crop year even if they have already accepted advance direct payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program. To elect ACRE for a farm, producers must complete Form CCC-509 ACRE, which irrevocably elects ACRE for the farm through crop year 2012. If enrolling in ACRE, all producers on a farm must agree to the ACRE Program election. Form CCC-509, the contract to participate in ACRE, must then be completed each year the producer intends to participate and receive benefits. ACRE payments are revenue-based payments tied to crop production and the National Average Market Price for planted, and considered planted, covered commodity crops on the farm. ACRE payment acreage is limited to the total amount of base acres on the farm, and can only be issued for a crop if two triggers are met for the covered commodity crop.

Frequently Asked Questions about ACRE

Q1: *If a farm is already enrolled in DCP and advance direct payments were issued, can the farm still participate in ACRE Program?*

Yes, as long as the producers on the farm elect and enroll in the ACRE Program during the sign-up period.

Q2: *If a farm misses the 2009 election period, can the producers elect to participate in a later year?*

Yes. The producers may elect the ACRE Program in a subsequent year.

Q3: *If one producer (owner, tenant, etc) on the farm does not sign the election form, can the farm still participate in the ACRE Program?*

No. Without exception, all producers must agree in writing to the ACRE Program election.

Q4: *If all producers sign the ACRE Program Election Form, is the farm considered enrolled in the ACRE Program?*

No. Producers on the farm must also sign a contract to enroll in ACRE Program by the sign-up deadline.

Q5: *Does a producer have to enroll all farms in ACRE?*

No. Election and enrollment for the ACRE Program is on a farm by farm basis.

Q6: *Can a farm enroll some base acres and not others?*

No, the enrollment is for the farm and all of the base acres.

Q7: *Can base acres be established to participate in the ACRE Program?*

No. There is no authority to establish base acres to participate in the ACRE Program.

Q8: *Is crop insurance or NAP required to receive ACRE payments?*

No, there are no risk management purchase requirements for the DCP or the ACRE Programs. However, higher levels of insurance due to higher premiums will enhance the ability to meet the "Farm Trigger."

Q10: *Can ACRE payments be calculated for eligible commodity crops that do not have base acres on the farm?*

Yes. ACRE payments are based on planted and considered planted acres of eligible commodity crops, without regard to whether the farm has base acres for that crop. However, the maximum acreage eligible for ACRE payments cannot exceed the total base acres on the farm.

Q11: *If the National Average Market Price for a covered commodity crop is higher than average, will this result in no ACRE payments?*

Not necessarily. Since the ACRE "triggers" are based on revenue (yield and prices) reductions, a significant yield loss for the State could result in ACRE payments.

Acreage Reporting

Acreage reporting time is here. Filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs. Failed acreage must be reported within 15 days of the disaster event and before disposition of the crop. Prevented planting must be reported no later than 15 days after the final planting date. Acreage reports are required for many Farm Service Agency programs and are to be certified by the **June 30th**.

NAP Production Reporting

Production records for individual crops need to be filed with our office to establish an approved NAP yield. If this is the first year you participated in NAP, you can provide production and acreage information from prior years to establish your yield. If you participated in NAP in previous years, you must report your production and acreage on a yearly basis to keep your yield up-to-date. Records submitted must be reliable or verifiable. Records need to show crop disposition. We recommend producers submit 2009 production records as soon as harvest is complete. **All production records must be submitted by the subsequent crop year's final acreage reporting date.**

Farm Reconstitutions

In program terminology, farms are *constituted* to group all tracts having the same owner and the same operator under one farm serial number. When changes in ownership or operation take place, a farm *reconstitution* is necessary. The reconstitution — or recon — is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. Please be sure to inform the office early if changes need to be made. If payments have already been issued on a particular farm, the reconstitution will be effective for the next year, unless the payments are refunded. Request for recons should be filed by June 1.

Farm Loans Available

Loan applications are being accepted for farm operating and ownership purposes. Operating loans include annual operating expenses, farm equipment and livestock purchases, and refinancing related debt. Ownership loans include the purchase or enlargement of a farm, or the construction and/or repair of buildings. Loan guarantees are available to lenders where FSA provides up to a 90% guarantee of loss on the principal of a farm loan. The loan purposes are similar to FSA's Direct Loans, except refinancing real estate debt is also eligible under the Guarantee Program.

FSA's ability to partner with commercial lenders provides for useful tools in meeting your credit needs. FSA can provide for just a portion of your credit needs i.e. a tractor purchase, etc. when we work in consultation with your commercial lender.

FSA provides Direct and Guarantee loan assistance for Beginning Farmers and Socially Disadvantaged producers as well. An applicant is considered a Beginning Farmer if they have not operated a farm for more than 10 years. Youth loans are available for 4-H and FFA members' ages 10 through 20 who want to start any income producing enterprise recommended by their leader.

Disaster Buy-In Waiver Extension

Producers who did not obtain crop insurance or Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for 2008 can pay a buy-in fee through **May 18, 2009**, to become eligible for 2008 disaster assistance programs authorized by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008. Farmers have an additional opportunity to become eligible for several programs if they suffered 2008 agricultural losses due to natural disaster.

If you have not already taken the necessary steps to become eligible for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE), Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP), and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP), you are required to complete the following steps by May 18, 2009:

- Pay a \$100 "buy-in" fee per crop. The maximum fee is \$300 per county, per producer, not to exceed \$900 for multi-county producers.
- In the case of each insurable crop, excluding grazing land, agree to obtain a policy or plan of insurance for the next insurance year for which crop insurance is available; coverage level should equal 70 percent or more of the yield at 100 percent of the price.
- In the case of each noninsurable crop, agree to file the required paperwork and pay the applicable administrative NAP coverage fee by the applicable State application closing date for the next available year.

Those who choose to "buy in" under this provision will be considered, for insured crops, to have obtained a policy or plan of insurance for the 2008 crop year at a level of coverage not to exceed 70 percent of the yield at 100 percent of the price. For noninsurable crops, producers will be considered to have a level of coverage equal to 70 percent of the yield. These levels of coverage will be used to calculate the 2008 SURE guarantee.

Producers who meet the definition of "Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource," or "Beginning Farmer or Rancher," are not required to pay the buy-in fee.

Save the Date...

Now that ACRE and DCP sign up deadlines have been announced, it may be necessary to review both programs to decide which program works best for you. *See page 1 & 2.*

A workshop will be held at the Pendleton Farm Service Agency to help work through available options.

Please register ahead: (541) 278-8049 x2

Dates to Remember

May 7	ACRE workshop 8 am Pendleton FSA Office Please register ahead at: (541) 278-8049 x 2
May 18	Disaster Buy-in Waiver Deadline
May 25	Office Closed - Memorial Day
June 30	Acreage Reporting Deadline
August 14	DCP & ACRE Sign-up Deadline
Continues	File NAP Notice of Loss within 15 Days of the loss being apparent/or final planting date for prevented planting.

Complaint Process

After an FSA official makes a decision on your request for USDA services or application, you will be sent a letter informing you of the decision and options you can pursue if you disagree. Generally, program participants have four choices – 1) an informal review with the original agency decision-maker, 2) an opportunity for mediation, 3) appeal to State Committee and/or 4) appeal to the USDA National Appeal Division (NAD).

Civil Rights Compliant Process

Any person, class or group of persons may file a discrimination complaint within 180 days of an alleged discriminatory action. Complaints may be filed in writing or orally with the agency head, any designated agency official or the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington D.C. 20250. Assistance in filing a complaint can be obtained by calling or visiting the FSA office.

"The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all 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, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a 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, Director, Office of Adjudication and Compliance, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."