

UNION COUNTY FARM SERVICE AGENCY

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| County Committee Members Jim Murchison Todd Arnoldus Shawn Bingaman |  E-Mail jennifer.isley@or.usda.gov | Union County FSA Office 1901 Adams Avenue, Suite 5 La Grande, OR 97850 |
| Phone: (541) 963-4178 Ext. 2 | January 2008 | FAX: (541) 962-1022 |

OFFICE STAFF: Jennifer Isley CED, Tim Hines PT, Tara Hett PT

OFFICE HOURS: Monday through Friday 7:30 am to 4:30 pm

OPEN HOUSE

The USDA Ag Service Center (**Farm Service Agency, Rural Development and Natural Resources Conservation Service**) has moved to a new office location at: 1901 Adams Avenue.

We will be hosting an open house on January 30th from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Stop by and check out the new offices. RD is located in Suite 1 (and is accessed through the FSA office). FSA is located in Suite 5 and NRCS is in Suite 6.

2007 COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

Congratulations to Shawn Bingaman and Gene Hardy. Shawn has been elected to represent producers from the Imbler, Summerville and Elgin areas (LAA#2) on the County Committee. Gene has been elected 1st Alternate.

Other Committee members are: Jim Murchison (Cove, Union and Telocaset areas) and Todd Arnoldus (La Grande, Starkey and North Powder). Committee members are elected for a 3 year term and can serve a maximum of 3 terms.

FSA appreciates all of the voters for taking the time to complete the election ballot. The county committee system works only because of your participation.

The committee will hold their organizational meeting January 17th. At that time they will determine a monthly meeting date and time as well as elect a chairman and vice-chairman.

Our thanks to Mary West for serving on the county committee for the last 3 years. Mary represented LAA #2 for 1 term. Prior to that Mary served on the committee as an Advisor.

UNION COUNTY NOW ELIGIBLE FOR THE LIVESTOCK COMPENSATION PROGRAM

With the recent passage of the 2008 Appropriations Act, livestock producers in Union County are now eligible for the Livestock Compensation Program (LCP). LCP provides benefits to livestock producers who suffered 2007 feed losses directly resulting from the drought which occurred during crop year 2007.

To be eligible, the livestock must have been physically located in Union County on January 1, 2007 and been maintained for commercial use as part of a farming operation. Producers must have either owned or cash-leased eligible livestock on January 1, 2007 and suffered an eligible loss from produced or purchased forage, or incurred additional feed costs as a result of the 2007 drought and the feed lost or additional feed cost incurred were intended for the use of eligible livestock.

Please call for an appointment (541) 963-4178 extension 2. You will need to provide the following information:

- number of cows, bulls and non-adult animals (500#) that you owned or cash-leased on January 1, 2007, that were located in Union County
- acres grazed by type (range, improved pasture etc.)
- additional feed costs incurred, if any
- your estimate of your grazing loss for 2007

SPECIAL ACCOMODATIONS

USDA-Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs are available to all eligible interested persons, including those with disabilities. Special accommodations will be made, upon request, for those individuals with disabilities, vision or hearing impairment. If special accommodations are required, please contact Jennifer Isley at (541)963-4178 ext. 105.

CROP DISASTER PROGRAM SIGN UP

The Farm Service Agency is currently accepting applications for the Crop Disaster Program (CDP). Producers may be eligible for benefits if they suffered quantity losses to their crops from natural disasters and related conditions that occurred in 2005, 2006 or 2007. **Crops planted after February 28, 2007 are now eligible for disaster assistance.** Producers who incurred qualifying losses in 2005, 2006 or 2007 must choose only one year to receive benefits.

Producers must have had multi peril crop insurance or coverage under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for the year of the loss to be eligible for CDP benefits.

Producers must have suffered a 35% or greater loss in quantity to be eligible for CDP. Payment will be made at 42% of the established price for the crop.

FSA will accept applications for quality losses during a future sign up.

FARM LOANS AVAILABLE

Loan applications are being accepted for farm operating and ownership purposes from those having difficulty obtaining credit through private lenders. 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. A minimum qualification for **Farm Ownership** loans is 3 years involvement in the business operations of a farm. **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 direct loans, except refinancing real estate debt is also eligible.

FSA provides direct and guarantee loan assistance for beginning farmers 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' age 10 through 20 who want to start any income producing enterprise recommended by their leader. For further information, please contact the farm loan staff in Pendleton at (541) 278-8049 ext. 2.

SPOUSAL SIGNATURES

Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office staff by either spouse.

2008 FARM RECORD CHANGES

If you have changes to your farming operation such as new owners, new operator or if you have added or decreased ground, please update your records with the FSA Office as soon as possible. If you have changed your operation to an entity or have changed entity type, entity members, or member percentages, please notify the FSA office of these changes. If you are doing business with a new tax ID number please prove the new number to the FSA office.

For farm ownership changes you will need to provide a recorded deed or land sale contract. All landowners must furnish their tax ID numbers. Failure to maintain accurate records with FSA on all land that you have an interest in can lead to possible program ineligibility and/or fines if you participate in farm programs.

AUTHORITY TO SIGN REQUIREMENTS

If you sign program documents for a business entity, use a DBA (doing business as) or you sign in a representative capacity for someone else, FSA is required to verify your signature authorization.

Please remember that FSA has a power of attorney form that is required if you are designating authority for someone to sign on your behalf. This form must either be notarized or the signature witnessed by an FSA employee.

FOREIGN INVESTORS MUST REPORT LAND HOLDINGS

“Any foreign person who acquires or transfers any interest, other than a security interest, in agricultural land in the United States is required by law to report the transaction no later than 90 days after the date of the transaction.”

Foreign investors must file AFIDA (Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act) reports with the Farm Service Agency County Office that maintains reports for the county where the land is located.

For AFIDA purposes, agricultural land is defined as any land used for farming, ranching or timber production, if the tracts total 10 acres or more. Disclosure reports are also required when there are changes in land use.

“Failure to file a report, filing a late report or filing an inaccurate report can result in a penalty with fines up to 25% of the fair market value of the agricultural land.”

IMPORTANT DATES

Jan. 21 Office closed, Martin Luther King Day
Jan. 30 Open House 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Feb. 18 Office closed, Presidents' Day

eGOV

Producers now have the option of conducting some business with the government online.

To register for a level 2 account you will need to access the following website: <http://www/eauth.egov.usda.gov/>

After registering on this website, you will need to visit the FSA office for identity verification. In addition, producers can inquire on any farm program financial transaction that has taken place in a county office that affects that producer, including payments, collections, debts and CCC-1099-G. That website can be accessed at: <http://customerstatement.usda.gov/>

2007 FSA PAYMENTS

During the last week of January, producers who received payments from FSA should receive a CCC-1099 in the mail from our Kansas City office. These are the dollar amounts that are reported to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). This form is not intended to replace your responsibility to report your income to the IRS.

If you receive a CCC-1099, please compare the amount shown with your records. If you believe the amount is incorrect, or if you have questions concerning the CCC-1099 please contact us. If there is an error, FSA will furnish a corrected CCC-1099 to you.

**Union County FSA Office
10507 N McAlister Rd. Rm. 2
La Grande, OR 97850**

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