



November 2011

Washington/Columbia County FSA Office

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Our farm loan staff can be contacted at 503-648-3174 Ext. 105 (Peggy's)

County Committee:

Jeff VanNatta, Becky Berger, Tom Duyck

Oregon FSA Website:
www.fsa.usda.gov/or

Committee Voting Begins

Ballots for this year's county committee election will be mailed to eligible voters on Nov. 4, 2011. Voters must complete their ballots and return them to the Farm Service Agency county office by the close of business on Dec. 5, 2011. If mailed, ballots must be postmarked by midnight Dec. 5, 2011.

The candidate is:

Jeff VanNatta is nominated in LAA 1, Columbia County, to serve as a committee member. VanNatta resides in Rainier, OR and produces beef cattle and is a certified tree farm for over 30 years.

Jeff is an active member of Natal/Pomona Grange Hall and Columbia County Small Woodland's Association. Currently, serving as County Committee Chairperson for USDA/Farm Service Agency.

Eligible voters in Local Administrative Area 1 who have not received a ballot should contact the FSA county office staff.

Voter Requirements - Persons meeting requirements in 1 or 2, plus 3, below, are eligible to vote:

1. Legal voting age and have an interest in a farm or ranch as any of the following: an individual, an authorized representative of an entity, spouses when property is owned jointly or in community property states.
2. Not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations on an entire farm.
3. Participates or cooperates in any FSA program that is provided by law.

Discrimination Prohibited No person shall be denied the right to vote because of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation or marital or family status.

Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE)

The sign-up for 2010 losses begins **Nov. 14, 2011** and will end **June 1, 2012**.

The Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disasters that incurred in the crop year 2010. SURE is available to eligible producers on:

- Farms in counties with Secretarial disaster declarations, including contiguous counties that have incurred at least a 10% crop production or quality loss, or both. All economically significant crops grown by a producer are eligible, **except** grazed crops.
- Any farm in which disaster-related conditions reduced the actual crop year production on the farm to 50 percent or less than normal production of the farm.

Online Services

Producers with Internet access can fill out a variety of FSA forms online. Producers can also register for secure electronic access that will allow them to electronically sign and transmit some forms directly to the county office staff. If you are new to the website, first you will want to obtain a Level 2 USDA Service Center Customer ID and password at: <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/> and then click on "Create an Account Page" link.

If you already have a Customer ID and password, then click on the following eForms website at: <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/mainservlet> and then click on the "Sign In" button. A disclaimer window will open and after you read the "Warning message" click on the "Continue" button.

Then the USDA Web services page will open to the eAuthentication login page. Enter your login User ID and password and then click on the "Login" button. To sign and transmit forms electronically, you must sign-up and get a User ID and password.

Adjusted Gross Income Report to IRS – Act Now

Producers should remember they must submit an Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) verification consent form (CCC-931) to maintain eligibility for 2010 and 2011 program benefits. Individuals and legal entities now are using one form: CCC-931 Average Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) Certification and Consent to Disclosure of Tax Information.

The consent form authorizes IRS to verify that a producer's AGI is within the requirements for FSA programs eligibility. Producers who failed to file these forms before Sept. 2011 will receive a final notice from the National Office. This notice will give the producer a final opportunity to submit the CCC-931 prior to becoming ineligible for all program payments (with the exception of some earlier multi-year CRP contracts.) The letter will provide instruction on where the completed form must be sent.

IRS requires written consent from all individuals or legal entities before verification of AGI eligibility can be provided to USDA. For more information contact your local FSA office.

2012 DCP/ACRE Signup

2012 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) enrollment begins Jan. 23, 2012 and ends June 1, 2012.

Here are IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

- 1) All producers planting on **DCP base** acres must be identified on the DCP/ACRE contract and receive a proportionate share of DCP/ACRE payment for the farm.
- 2) Changes on the farm after enrolling June 1st in DCP/ACRE **must** be reported to your local FSA office such as:
 - Ownership changes
 - Producer changes (Individuals and Entities)
 - Change in crop shares arrangements
- 3) Changes cannot be made after Sept. 30, 2012.

Note: There will be no advance payments for 2012.

Loans for the Socially Disadvantaged

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. Funds are available for operating loans and to purchase or improve farms or ranches (ownership loans.)

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, the FSA has provided priority funding for members of socially disadvantaged applicants.

A socially disadvantaged applicant is someone who has been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as a member of a group, without regard to his or her individual qualities.

For purposes of this program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

CREP & Continuous CRP Available

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) allows farmers and ranchers to voluntarily enroll environmentally sensitive land into a program that decreases erosion, restores wildlife habitat and safeguards ground and surface water. CREP is a partnership with the federal government and the State of Oregon and covers all areas of the state..

Environmentally sensitive acreage qualifying for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) or Continuous CRP will be eligible for annual rental payments and cost-share of up to 50 percent from FSA and 25 percent from the State of Oregon on approved practices. These programs will remain funded, and continue to provide heightened environmental benefits on select areas.

Contact your local office or riparian technician for more information.



NOTICE TO HISPANIC AND/OR WOMEN FARMERS OR RANCHERS

COMPENSATION FOR CLAIMS OF DISCRIMINATION

If you believe that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) improperly denied farm loan benefits to you between 1981 and 2000 because you are Hispanic, or because you are female, you may be eligible to apply for compensation.

To register your name to receive a claims packet, call the Farmer and Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429 or visit: www.farmerclaims.gov

The claims package will have detailed information about the eligibility and claims process.



USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Hispanic and Women Farmers

A process to resolve the claims of Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who believe they were discriminated against when seeking USDA farm loans has been established.

If you believe that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) improperly denied farm loan benefits to you between 1981 and 2000 because you are Hispanic or because you are female, you may be eligible to apply for compensation.

For additional information on this and other settlement issues contact:

Hispanic and Women Farmer Claims Process:

www.farmerclaims.gov or call
1-888-508-4429

Pigford – The Black Farmers Discrimination Litigation:

www.blackfarmercase.com or call
1-866-950-5547

Keepseagle - The Native American Farmers Class Action Settlement:

www.IndianFarmClass.com or call
1-888-233-5506

Marketing Assistance Loans

Marketing Assistance loans are commodity loans available to producers who share in the risk of producing the crop. To be eligible, you must maintain beneficial interest in the crop through the time of application. Beneficial interest means retaining the ability to make decisions about the commodity, maintaining responsibility for loss or damage to the commodity, and maintaining title to the commodity. Once beneficial interest in the commodity is lost, the commodity is ineligible for a loan.

Commodity loan eligibility also requires compliance with conservation and wetland protection requirements; reporting use of cropland acreage on the farm and ensuring that the commodity meets CCC minimum grade and quality standards. For commodities to be eligible they must have been produced by an eligible producer, and exist in a storable and merchantable condition for food, feed or other uses as determined by CCC. The quality of the commodity in farm storage must be maintained throughout the term of the loan. Producers do not have to participate in the Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program to be eligible for commodity loans.

Violating provisions of a marketing assistance loan may trigger administrative actions, such as assessing liquidated damages, calling the loan and denial of future farm-stored loans.

The most common violations are removing or disposing of a commodity being used as loan collateral without prior authorization and providing an incorrect quantity certification.

Eligible commodities include: wheat, field corn (including silage), barley, oats, honey, flax seed, mustard seed, rape seed, safflower, soybeans, sunflower seed, crambe and whole dry peas (smooth green, smooth yellow, wrinkled, winter field, mixed dry & miscellaneous.)

Unauthorized Deposition of Grain or Other Commodity

If grain or any commodity under loan has been disposed of through feeding, selling or any other form of disposal without prior written authorization from the county office staff, it is considered unauthorized disposition. The financial penalties for unauthorized dispositions are severe and a producer's name is placed on a loan violation list for a two-year period. Always call to check for restrictions before you haul any commodity under loan.

Native American Farmers and Ranchers

The claims process is open until December 27, 2011 for Native American farmers and ranchers who believe they are entitled to funds under the Keepseagle settlement. Claims packets must be completed and submitted by December 27, 2011 to have a chance to receive a cash payment or loan forgiveness.

Claimant services representatives can be reached through the Keepseagle claims website: <http://www.indianfarmclass.com> or through calling 888-233-5506. Claimants must register for a claims package (by calling or visiting the website) and the claims package will be mailed to the claimants.

Get Your FSA Records Up to Date Now

Now is the time to get your land records updated at the local FSA office before any contracting starts for 2012. If you have picked up new ground, dropped a lease or if you have purchased or sold ground, please let the office know so we can update the files. If you have purchased, bring a copy of the deed or tax records; if new ground bring the lease or have the owner give the office a call.

Do you farm in more than one county and would like your records transferred to one county for ease of administration? Get that started now as well. Your owner(s) must agree to the transfer, so don't wait until you want to sign your contracts or do an acreage report.



REPORT PERCENT OR MEMBER CHANGES IN YOUR ENTITY?

USDA payments and benefits are subject to producer eligibility and limitation provisions as defined by law. FSA program benefits may not be provided to any producer until the applicable payment eligibility determinations are made. A producer will remain ineligible until all required forms for the specific situation are provided. Payment Limitation/Eligibility determinations may be initiated by the FSA County Committee or requested by the producer. Once completed, documents and forms to determine eligibility are reviewed for the year submitted. A farm operating plan (payment eligibility and payment limitation form CCC-902) is not required to be filed annually if the farming operation continues to be conducted as reflected on the farm operating plan (CCC-902), and supporting documents are on file in the County Office. However, if any changes occur that could affect an “actively engaged in farming,” “cash-rent tenant” or “average adjusted gross income” determination, producers must timely notify the County Office by filing revised farm operating plans and/or supporting documentation. Failure to do so may adversely affect the producer’s payment eligibility. All payment eligibility forms (CCC-902) submitted by a producer are subject to spot check through the End-of-Year Review process. Farming operations selected for an End-of-Year Review will be required to submit documents to verify their contributions of capital, land, equipment, labor, and management. Please contact the County Office for questions concerning documents to be submitted. Individuals, joint operations, or entities which are determined to be “not actively engaged in farming” will be ineligible for Direct and Counter Cyclical (DCP) Payments. The limitation for the following programs is per “person” per fiscal year. Under the Direct and Counter Cyclical Program (DCP) and Average Crop Revenue Election Program (ACRE), direct payments are limited to \$40,000; and counter cyclical payments and ACRE payments are limited to \$65,000; Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) payments are limited to \$50,000; Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP) payments are limited to \$100,000. SURE will pay up to \$100,000 annually including any benefits received from LIP, LFP and ELAP.

Changing Banks

Almost all Farm Service Agency payments are made electronically using Direct Deposit.

To maintain efficient payment processing, it is critical to keep the county office staff up to date on changes you might make with your financial institutions.

If you have made changes to accounts or have changed banking institutions, these changes might affect the direct deposit of your FSA payments. When changes like these are made, be sure to contact the FSA county office so we can update our records to ensure efficient and uninterrupted service.

Selected Interest Rates - Nov. 2011	
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%
Farm Operating - Direct	1.375
Farm Ownership - Direct	3.750%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.500%
Emergency Loans	3.750%
Farm Storage Facility	1.5%-2.25%
Commodity Loans	1.125%

Dates to Remember	
November	Native American Heritage Month
11/11/2011	Veterans' Day Holiday
11/14/2011	2010 SURE Sign-up Begins
11/21/2011	NAP Sales closing date for Perennial crops and honey
11/24/2011	Thanksgiving Day Holiday
12/05/2011	Deadline to return or postmark COC Election Ballots

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