



WHATCOM COUNTY FSA NEWS

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2008

Office Information

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Office Hours

Monday – Friday
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

County Committee

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Debbie Smit, Vice Chair
Dan Noteboom, Member
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National USDA Website
<http://www.usda.gov>

National FSA Website
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov>

State FSA Website
<http://www.usda.gov/wa>

UPCOMING IMPORTANT DEADLINES AND DATES TO REMEMBER

February 4th – Ag Census Due

April 1st – Application Status Date

April 15th – Deadline to purchase NAP Insurance for spring planted crops.

Office Closures

February 18th – President's Day

May 26th – Memorial Day

July 4th – Independence Day

Handicapped

Accommodations: Special accommodations will be arranged for those persons with a physical, vision, or hearing impaired disability. If special accommodations are needed, please contact our office.

ELECTION RESULTS

The results are in for the Whatcom County Committee elections!

Ed Strachila was reelected for another 3 year term and was selected to be the County Committee Chairman by the Committee members. Jeremy Visser is the First Alternate, Kimberly Roe is the Second Alternate, and Ron Bennett was elected Third Alternate. Thank you for your participation.

ARE YOU OPERATING AS A DBA?

The Farm Service Agency State Committee in WA Notice CM-34 has established the following policy that will be applied to 2008 and later program/crop/fiscal year participation.

Participation shall be limited to legally recognized participants, such as individuals, joint operations, and entities. Individuals cannot participate or receive payments through a DBA or a DBA tax identification number. Only the legally recognized participant, such as an individual, joint operation, or entity, may participate. Eligibility documents such as the AD-1026, CCC-502, and CCC-526 shall be completed for, and submitted by, the individual or other legally recognized participant.

REPORT STORM DAMAGE

Farmers who suffered damages due to recent weather events are urged to notify the FSA Office. We are currently in the process of deciding what disaster assistance programs to implement. Without reports of damage we may be limited to the types of assistance that could be offered. Please call the office to report your damage.

EMERGENCY LOAN PROGRAM

Emergency Loans are available to commercial agricultural producers who cannot obtain credit at normal terms and rates from the private sector. The current loan rate is 3.75% fixed. Emergency loan funds can be used to restore/replace essential property, pay production costs associated with the disaster, pay essential family living expenses, reorganize the farming operation, or refinance certain existing debt. Loan amounts are limited to the smaller of \$500,000 or the actual value of the physical losses. Emergency loans

are considered a temporary source of credit and borrowers are reviewed periodically to determine whether they can return to commercial credit in the private sector. Emergency loans must be requested within eight months of the disaster declaration.

FSA also offers direct operating and farm ownership loan programs, as well as administering a guaranteed loan portfolio. Loans to youths ranging in age from 10 – 20 years old are also available.

For loan information contact Mark Turner in this office.

DISASTER SIGNUP CONTINUES

Livestock Compensation Program (LCP), and Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) producer signup began September 10, 2007.

Whatcom County is approved for 2006 losses between April 1, 2006, through March 31, 2007, for the Livestock Compensation Program (LCP) that compensates livestock producers for non-irrigated improved and native grasses and forage sorghum feed losses and the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) that compensates producers for the physical loss (death) of livestock due to natural disasters.

Producers who suffered losses in multiple years must choose which year to receive payments for the livestock programs.

The Crop Disaster Program (CDP) signup began October 15, 2007.

Signup deadlines for these programs have yet to be announced.

The Crop Disaster Program provides payments to producers who suffered approved yield losses of more than 35% or prevented plantings.

The disaster period has been extended from February 28, 2007, to December 30, 2007, to cover the December storms. The program covers weather related losses that occurred in 2005, 2006, or 2007 crop years for all crops planted, or prevented from being planted, before **December 30, 2007.**

Producers may claim losses for multiple crops in multiple years. The producer may only be paid for the most beneficial eligible crop year.



Signup for **QUALITY** economic losses will be announced at a later date.

You must have in excess of a 25% economic loss to be eligible for benefits.

There is an \$80,000 payment limitation per "person" per program.

To be eligible, for quantity and quality losses producers must have obtained Commercial Crop Insurance or coverage under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for the year for which they claim benefits.

If you suffered crop losses and did not have either Crop Insurance or NAP coverage please carefully consider the importance of adding these risk management options to your business plan for 2008 and future years.

2008 NAP SIGN-UP

The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) was designed to reduce financial losses that occur when natural disasters cause a catastrophic loss of production or prevented planting of an eligible crop providing coverage equivalent to CAT insurance.

The coverage period begins 30 calendar days after the application closing date and ends the earlier of one of the following:

- 10 months from the application closing date
- The date harvest is complete
- Abandonment of the crop
- Total destruction of the crop

Producers pay an application fee of \$100 per crop with a \$300 cap per county. You receive a payment if all eligibility requirements have been met and the crop suffers an approved loss greater than a 50% production loss for weather related damages.

The application closing date to purchase coverage for the 2008 crop year for spring planted crops for NAP is March 15th. Small grain forages such as wheat, barley, and oats are eligible.

Contact the County Office for more information.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES WITH FSA

Employment opportunities for the USDA Farm Service Agency and located within Washington State are listed on the FSA website <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa>. Vacancies are posted on the home page and from the "Search for Job Openings Link" on the same page. Anyone interested is encouraged to frequently monitor these websites. FSA is dedicated to serving farmers and ranchers.

APPLICATION STATUS DATE

The status of an individual or entity on April 1 of the applicable crop, program, or fiscal year is the basis on which "person" determinations are made for the applicable crop, program, or fiscal year.

Actions taken by an individual or entity after April 1 of the applicable crop, program, or fiscal year shall:

- Not increase the number of "persons" for the applicable crop, program, or fiscal year.
- Be used to determine whether there has been a decrease in the number of "persons" for the applicable crop, program, or fiscal year.

FARM BILL

The 2008 Farm Bill is still under debate in Congress. It is unknown at this time when the bill will be implemented. Without a Farm Bill in place we are unable to take sign-ups for the DCP Program. We will keep you informed through future newsletters of new program sign-ups.

2007 AG CENSUS

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) mailed 2007 Ag Census forms on December 28, 2007. This Census only occurs every five years. This Census provides information to policy makers that control decisions concerning agricultural and rural programs. This is your opportunity to make a difference. This Census is your voice, your future, and your responsibility. The information you provide is not available anywhere else. Please mail your Census prior to February 4, 2008. If you need assistance, please call the contact number on your Census form.