

November 17, 2006

Columbia/Walla Walla County FSA News

Phone: (509) 382-2421 Dayton (509) 522-6347 Walla Walla

Julie Himmelberger, CED
Julie.himmelberger@wa.usda.gov

Walla Walla County FSA
 1501 Business One Circle # 100
 Walla Walla WA 99362-9526
 FAX: (509) 525-2811

Walla Walla County Committee
 Richard "Steve" Hair, Chairman
 Jack McCaw, Vice Chair
 Steve Bughi, Voting Member
 Valerie Cochran, Advisor

Office Staff
 Nicole Armijo
 Jeri Casali
 Norma Colunga
 Lee Walters
 Ray Painter, Temp.

Columbia County FSA
 202 South Second Street
 Dayton WA 99328-1327
 FAX: (509) 382-4084

Columbia County Committee
 Valerie Turner, Vice Chairman
 Dan McKinley, Voting Member
 Jay Penner, 1st Alternate

Office Staff
 Christy Bell
 Gerri Richter

Office Hours
 Monday – Friday
 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

2006 Loan Rates

Columbia		Walla Walla
\$2.95/Bu	SWW	\$2.95/Bu
\$3.20/Bu	HRS	\$3.20/Bu
\$3.22/Bu	HRW	\$3.23/Bu
\$2.09/Bu	Barley	\$2.12/Bu or
\$87.09/Ton		\$88.34/Ton
\$5.23/Bu	Soybeans	\$5.32/Bu
\$6.63/cwt	DPeas	\$6.63/cwt

Dates to Remember:
 Nov. 23 – Thanksgiving Day
 Office Closed
 Dec. 6th – Count Ballots (Wa-2)
 Dec. 7th – Count Ballots (Dayton)
 Dec. 25 – Christmas, Office Closed

Call for appointment to sign-up

Please keep us informed of any changes in your farming operation.



EMERGENCY CONSERVATION PROGRAM APPROVAL

The FSA National office manager of Emergency Conservation Programs has approved our request to implement Emergency Conservation Programs (ECP) in Columbia County. Approval was given to address damages caused by the Columbia Complex Fire. All requested practices, Restoring Permanent Fences, Rangeland Restoration and Hauling Water for Livestock, were approved. The Columbia County FSA office will have a signup period from November 20 through December 11, 2006 for those interested in receiving some cost share assistance to address damages resulting from this disastrous event. Although the County has been approved for this program, currently no ECP funds are available. There is no guarantee when the funds will be provided, however we believe with the approval of the fiscal year 2007 Agricultural appropriation bill, funding will become available. For detailed information regarding this Emergency Conservation Program, please contact the Columbia County FSA office. If you believe you may qualify for some assistance, please do not miss the program signup period of **November 20 through December 11, 2006.**

COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

County Committee election ballots have been mailed to eligible voters in the applicable local administrative areas by our Kansas City Office. Producers need to return the ballots to the local FSA office by no later than December 4, 2006 to be counted. In Columbia County, Jay Penner was nominated to represent the Northwestern area of the County. In Walla Walla County, voters in the Northwestern portion of the County will have the choice of one of the following nominees: Richard "Steve" Hair, Claudia Kelly or Ryan Kregger. Please exercise your right to vote.

DIRECT & COUNTER-CYCLICAL PROGRAM SIGNUP

Signup for the final year of the Direct & Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) began on October 2nd and will continue through June 1, 2007. To receive benefits under DCP, producers must sign a contract each year. Signup may take a bit longer this year as we will be spending more time reviewing all applicable forms with you to insure all information is current and accurate.

The Direct payment rate for wheat is \$.52/bushel and \$.24/bushel for barley. Advance direct payments will be 22% of the total payment rate, down from the 40% advance offered last year. Advance payments will be offered to those who have signed all applicable paperwork, beginning in December 2006. To insure we can provide you with the best service, please schedule an appointment with the office for program signup. Or, complete the process for on-line access and signup from your home "online".

NON-INSURED ASSISTANCE PROGRAM DEADLINES

2007 Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for berries, tree fruit, grapes, asparagus, honey and other perennial crops (not including forage and perennials with the Sept. 30 deadline) must be purchased by November 20th. This is the same deadline for berries, tree fruit and grapes under the Federal Crop Insurance Program. Remember that NAP is offered on crops not covered by Federal Crop Insurance. However, as is the case with some tree fruit crops, a young orchard may not meet insurable levels outlined by Federal Crop Insurance, therefore it may qualify for some protection under NAP. Please visit with your Crop Insurance Agent for Federal Crop Insurance coverage and the FSA office for NAP program information. Don't miss the deadlines!

EMERGENCY USE OF CRP DUE TO WILDFIRES

As announced in the October newsletter, Columbia and Walla Walla Counties were given approval from the national office to allow grazing on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage with NO payment reduction. This authorization to graze is limited to producers who were *directly affected* by wildfires including but not limited to the Columbia Complex Fire. Before any grazing begins, a revised

conservation plan must be approved that will outline stocking rates. Grazing is limited to 60 days and ends on March 31, 2007. Call the office for more details.

REVISED PROVISIONS FOR MANAGED HAYING & GRAZING OF CRP

The National Wildlife Federation filed a complaint in U.S. District Court on October 21, 2004, challenging certain provisions of the managed haying and grazing on CRP acreage. The lawsuit alleged that the managed haying and grazing practices violated the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Food Security Act of 1985, and the Administrative Procedure Act. Specifically, the lawsuit challenged the frequency allowed for managed haying and grazing on CRP acreage and the dates set as the primary nesting season that limits haying and grazing activities. The lawsuit specified several States, including Washington State. The federal government has settled with the complainant with changes affecting managed haying and grazing policies. The changes will limit managed haying and grazing to once in 10 years rather than once in 4 years for most producers. **Producers who have conservation plans that already include managed haying and grazing will be able to remain under the “old” rules and utilize managed haying and grazing on those specific contracts once in every 4-years.** The settlement with the National Wildlife Federation also changed the primary nesting season back to April 1 through August 1. The new nesting season dates only apply to managed haying and grazing and do not apply to other activities on CRP. They remain unchanged at April 1 through June 1 for non-intrusive operations such as spraying and April 1 through July 1 for intrusive operations such as mowing.

FARM OPERATING PLANS

Farm Loan Program and Farm Program benefits are extended to eligible producers in the farming community. We are currently reviewing provided farm operating plans to insure that producers are farming under the same name or same ‘entity’ when involved with the farm loan programs and farm programs. Notices are being sent out to producers where this is not the case so they can rectify the situation and remain eligible for continued program benefits. It is advisable that you insure your FSA Farm Loan Manager as well as the Farm Program staff are consulted before changing your farm business structure, as eligibility rules for each program area differ.

PAYMENT LIMITATION AND ELIGIBILITY

Producers participating in certain Farm Service Agency programs are subject to limitations on the total annual payments that can be received per “person.” The maximum amount a “person” can receive per year are: Direct payments - \$40,000; Counter-Cyclical payments and TAA payments - \$65,000; TAP payments, LDP and market loan gains, including wool, mohair, and honey - \$75,000; CRP and CREP rental payments -\$50,000; EQIP Cost Shares - \$450,000 (for the life of the contract); NAP - \$100,000; and CDP - \$80,000.

The farm bill of 2002 created a new eligibility rule for some of the programs. This is the Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) rule which requires an individual or entity to certify whether their average adjusted gross income exceeds \$2.5 million, and if it exceeds that amount, whether more than 75% of their AGI is derived from farming, ranching, or forestry operations. Non-compliance to this eligibility rule will result in an ineligibility determination for benefits subject to the AGI rules. Contact the local FSA office for more details.

For More Information regarding on-Line Program Availability

Please feel free to give me a call, or check out the FSA Website at: www.fsa.usda.gov . You can complete your on-line program registration by accessing: <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov> . Receiving your e-Authentication Account will allow you to access your program participation information, review your program payment history, enroll in the Direct and Counter Cyclical Program (DCP) or apply for loan deficiency payments. It really is quick and easy.