



# NEWSLETTER



**August, 2012**

## **Garfield County FSA**

PO Box 18  
Pomeroy, WA 99347-0018  
Phone – (509) 843-1997  
Fax – (509) 843-1168

## **Asotin County FSA**

720 6<sup>th</sup> Street Ste. B  
Clarkston, WA 99403-2012  
Phone – (509) 758-7821  
Fax – (509) 758-7533

## **Office Hours**

Mon.-Fri. - 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

## **Garfield County Committee**

Diane Koller – Chair  
Max Scoggin – Vice Chair  
Chris Wolf – Member

## **Asotin County Committee**

Bruce Petty – Chair  
Susie Appleford – Vice Chair  
Earl Fitzgerald - Member

## **Farm Program Staff**

Jeremy Nelson – CED  
Sherri Meacham – PT  
Emily Ruchert – PT  
Connie Forsmann – PT  
Lorelei McNamee - PT

## **FSA Web sites:**

State:  
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa>  
National:  
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov>

## **Dates to Remember**

- **September 3** – Service Center closed for Labor Day.
- **September 5** – Asotin County Committee Meeting – 9:00 am
- **September 18** – Garfield County Committee Meeting – 9:00 am
- **September 30** –
  - New CRP initiatives sign-up deadline (see pg. 2)

## **COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS**

The nomination period for candidates seeking to serve on the Garfield and Asotin County Farm Service Agency Committee closed August 1, with the following persons submitting a nomination to serve as representatives for LAA 2 in each county for a three year term.

### **Garfield County:**

Keith Berglund  
Brian Heitstuman

### **Asotin County:**

Bruce Petty

Thank you to each of these persons for volunteering their services if elected. The County Committee system is an important part of the USDA process, providing the farm community with a local voice in helping to administer federally mandated programs. Ballots will be mailed to all persons within LAA 2 during the early part of November; final date to return ballots is Monday, December 3, 2012. Ballots will be tabulated during the regular County Committee meeting, on Wednesday December 5, 2012, in Asotin County and Thursday December 6, 2012, in Garfield County beginning at 9:00 a.m. The meeting is open to the public.

## **CROP MARKETING TOOLS AVAILABLE**

FSA offers 9-month marketing assistance loans, using the harvested commodity as collateral. Obtaining a loan enables a producer to extend their marketing season by allowing them to hold the commodity beyond harvest when prices are usually lowest. The collateralized commodity may be stored on the farm or in CCC licensed warehouses. Farm storage must be safe and available for FSA inspection at any time. If all eligibility criteria and application requirements are met, loans can generally be disbursed in less than a week (delays usually attributable to lien search results).

### **2012 Basic Crop Loan Rates for Garfield and Asotin Counties:**

Oats =	\$1.37/bu.	HRS Wheat =	\$3.27/bu.
HRW Wheat =	\$3.50/bu.	SWW Wheat =	\$3.06/bu.
Barley =	\$2.20/bu (\$91.67/ton).		

Other eligible crop loan rates and general loan and LDP information can be found by clicking on this link: [FSA Loans/LDP's](#).

Producers who obtain a marketing assistance loan agree to loan provisions. Violating provisions 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 of the available loan commodity.

## **CONTINUOUS CRP ADDS THREE NEW PRACTICE INITIATIVES**

New changes to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) will make it easier to enroll land meeting certain criteria into the program on a non-competitive basis. However, signup under these new initiatives ends **September 30, 2012**.

The Highly Erodible Land initiative allows producers to non-competitively enter land with an Erosion Index of 20 or greater into CRP. An Erosion Index (EI) of 20 means, on average, this land has the potential to erode at 20 tons of soil per acre per year. Producers may sign a CRP contract with the FSA at any time under this new provision and not have to wait for a general signup period. The agency is authorized to accept up to 10,300 acres with an EI of 20 in Washington.

Other changes include a new practice emphasizing a mix of plants that flower throughout the growing season for pollinators, and 20 to 120-foot wide field borders for upland birds. Land bid into CRP for pollinator habitat must be at least 20 feet in width and individual plantings must be a minimum of 0.5 acres. There are no maximum limits on width or contract size. Field borders must generally be implemented around an entire field, but at a minimum they must be installed where runoff enters or leaves the field.

For all three initiatives, eligible land must have been planted to an annual crop or conserving use in at least four years between 2002 and 2007. Land currently in CRP and within one year of the contract expiration date may be enrolled under the new initiatives. Leaving the most highly erodible soils in CRP and farming the rest of the land may be an option for some producers with expiring CRP contracts.

Contracts involve planting specified mixtures of grasses and forbs and maintaining them for ten years. In general, no other income, besides the rental rates, can be derived from the land while under contract. Rental rates are based on the relative productivity of the soils within each county and the average dryland cash rent or cash rent equivalent.

All practices are eligible for 50% cost sharing to install the cover. Enrollment of land for pollinator habitat or field borders is eligible for a 40% practice incentive payment (like cost shares) and a \$150 per acre signing incentive payment (SIP). The Highly Erodible Land initiative does not include additional payments beyond the annual rental payments and the cost-share to establish the vegetative cover.

Please contact our office if you have any questions on these newly announced initiatives.

## **DEADLINES FOR NON-INSURED CROP DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

The application closing date to purchase coverage for the 2013 crop year for fall planted crops under the Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) is as follows:

<b>Crops</b>	<b>Application Closing Date</b>
Canola and rapeseed; onions, radish, carrots, and cabbage (for seed or fresh); value loss crops (aquaculture, Christmas Trees, turf grass sod, floriculture, mushrooms); artichokes and any fall planted crops not mentioned below.	August 31
Perennial grazing crops; perennial forage crops; forage seed crops; mint; wheat; garlic.	September 30
All perennial crops not listed in the 9/30 category (berries, fruit trees, grapes, asparagus); honey; hops.	November 20
All spring planted crops including small grain for forage, mustard and camelina, and summer planted buckwheat	March 15

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To apply for NAP coverage, the application must be filed on or before the application closing date for the crop and NAP fees must be paid. The coverage fee is \$250 per crop, up to a \$750 cap per county and the maximum for multiple crops in more than one county is \$1,875 per crop year. In return, the crop is covered from catastrophic loss of production or prevented planting due to natural disaster conditions. Those producers who bought coverage last year (if not already) will soon receive crop specific continuous coverage letters with instructions for fee payment for the 2013 crop coverage year.

To be eligible for NAP benefits, production loss must be attributed to adverse weather conditions. Losses must be reported to FSA within 15 days after the adverse weather event or when the loss becomes evident. You may receive a payment if all eligibility requirements have been met and the crop suffers greater than a 50% production loss for weather related damages.

Some of the basic eligibility requirements include annual reporting of crop acreages, providing actual production evidence on a yearly basis, obtaining a loss adjustor appraisal if the damaged crop will be destroyed or left unharvested. Contact our office if you would like more information or are interested in applying for NAP coverage.

### **UPCOMING CHANGES TO CROP ACREAGE REPORTING DATES**

Implementation of common acreage reporting dates is a major step by the Risk Management Agency (RMA) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) to reduce the duplication of acreage reporting by producers. This change does not reduce or modify the programs or services that RMA or FSA provides, but will enable crop insurance agents and FSA office staff to collect information in a more uniform and efficient manner. Washington producers will begin to work with these changes beginning with the 2013 crop year. Please consult the table for new reporting dates.

<b>Crops Planned for 2013 Harvest</b>	<b>Reporting Date</b>
Fall Alfalfa Seed, Barley, Canola, Mint, Onions (planted 8/15-9/15), Wheat and all other fall seeded small grains.	December 15, 2012
Apples, Blueberries, Cherries, Cranberries, Fresh Apricots, Fresh Freestone Peaches Fresh Nectarines, Grapes, Pears and Plums.	January 15, 2013
Spring Alfalfa Seed, Spring Barley, Cabbage(planted 4/21-6/10), Spring Canola Corn, Dry Beans, Dry Peas (planted 3/9-5/25), Green Peas, Spring Mint, Mustard, Spring Oats, Onions(planted 3/14-4/20), Potatoes, Processing Beans, Soybeans Sugar Beets, Sweet Corn and Spring Wheat.	July 15, 2013
All Other Crops not listed above (including CRP).	July 15, 2013

Reporting acreage timely is a requirement for most FSA programs. If harvest or grazing will occur before the established reporting date, producers must report acreage prior to harvest or grazing begins. In addition, crops planted after the established reporting dates can report timely by amending the previous acreage report within 15 days after planting.

### **FSA ADOPTS NEW CHECK COLLECTION PROCESSING METHOD**

Producers who make payments by check to the Farm Service Agency can expect to see a change soon in how those checks are processed. FSA is adopting an electronic method for processing check payments from customers.

Using the electronic method, if you submit a paper check payment, either in person or through the mail, the check will be converted into an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) using Over the Counter Channel (OTCnet), a web-based application.

The transfer of funds will be reflected on your bank account statement. The transaction may be recorded in a different place on your statement than where your checks normally appear, such as under "other withdrawals" or "other transactions." You have protection under Federal law for an unauthorized electronic fund transfer from your account. You should contact your financial institution immediately if you believe that the transaction reported on your account statement was not properly authorized or is otherwise incorrect.

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It is important for you to have sufficient funds in your bank account because the electronic transfer of funds could occur within 24 hours. FSA will hold the paper check for up to 14 calendar days to ensure that the transaction was successfully processed and then the check will be shredded. You will not receive the paper check back from FSA.

The agency is implementing the new system to reduce the possibility of losing or misplacing checks, speed up the check clearing process and to reduce the potential for human error.

For more information regarding electronic check processing, contact the county FSA office or see the U.S. Department of Treasury Internet site by clicking on the following link: <http://fms.treas.gov/otcnet/legal.html>.

### **BANKING CHANGES? LET FSA KNOW**

If you have changed banks and have not notified FSA, this could delay your payments in October. These changes could include things like the type of account, bank mergers, new account numbers or routing numbers. Producers who banked with the old Bank of Whitman are encouraged to contact FSA to make sure we have the most up to date direct deposit information on file to ensure payments are processed correctly.

### **AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS PROVIDE INDIRECT BUT IMPORTANT BENEFITS**

USDA-National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is conducting two surveys that are crucial to get information on small grain production on a county level basis.

Beginning in mid August, producers may receive a CAPS (County Ag. Production Survey) questionnaire to collect data on total acres planted and harvested, and total yield and production of small grains in Washington State.

Other producers may receive a *Agricultural Survey – September 1, 2012* at the end of August.

Producers who receive the survey may respond in either of the following ways:

**Online** – Secure, online reporting is the most timely, cost-effective option. The cover letter includes instructions for this easy option.

**By mail or fax** – Producers fill out the survey questionnaire and return it in the envelope provided or via fax.

A NASS representative will contact producers who do not respond to offer the option of a telephone or personal interview.

### **WHO USES THE INFORMATION?**

All sectors of the agricultural industry rely on NASS to produce timely and accurate acreage, yield, and production estimates. For instance, USDA agencies use the information to evaluate and administer vital farm commodity, credit, conservation, disaster, insurance and loan programs.

- USDA's Farm Service Agency uses the estimates to administer disaster assistance programs
- USDA's Risk Management Agency uses the data to administer the Federal Crop Insurance Program.

Businesses look at the data when determining where to locate processing plants and other facilities.

NASS understands producers are busy this time of year, but have been tasked to collect the data from only a small sample of small grain farmers. Please respond to make sure this important data is as accurate as possible. For additional information please contact NASS WA Director David Knopf at 1 800 435-5883.