



EL AGRICULTOR LATINO (THE LATINO FARMER)

CENTER FOR LATINO FARMERS

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Nine Latino Farmers Successfully Complete FSA Required Borrower Training!

It took several years to get the Center's Spanish/English financial management training certified by FSA as an official certified vendor for borrower training. In just a few months, the Center saw success in the program. The Center held its first 20-hour certified borrower training workshop on four evening sessions from November 6th to 9th.

"I understood and learned, the instructors were knowledgeable and patient with us."

-Oscar Zapien

Nine Latino farmers, representing three different FSA County offices, Benton, Chelan & Yakima, were awarded Certificates of Completion for their accomplishment.

Attendees participated in hands on work and learned how to utilize a financial record keeping system, how to develop balance sheets, cash flows and projections, and how to use that data to make informed business decisions for their farms,

As part of the course evaluation, some attendees noted their challenging experiences they had in the past. "This workshop was very good. I signed up for a long distance course from Penn State University and paid \$155. It was too complicated for me and no one could help me, compared to this one, so I did not want to attend, but I am so glad I that did," said one of the farmers. Another farmer Oscar Zapien noted in his evaluation, "I understood and learned, the instructors were knowledgeable and patient with us." All of the farmers who had attended the workshop were grateful and pleased with the results.



The Center has been teaching financial management workshops for the past four years, but only became a designated FSA vendor last spring.

Blanca Alvitres, Financial Outreach Specialist with the help of Luz Bazan Gutierrez provided the training using the approved FSA Curriculum. Luz Gutierrez said, "It was a long four days but being with an enthusiastic group of farmers that were anxious and excited to learn made it worth the long hours dedicated to this training."

If you are interested in signing up for the next training or if you have any questions please call (509) 453-3157.

Alvitres Presenter at 102nd Annual Hort Convention

Blanca Alvitres, Outreach Financial Specialist, made a presentation in Spanish to about 200 Latino farm workers and farmers at the 102nd Annual Horticultural Convention held at the Yakima Convention Center on December 5, 2006.

The session was entitled "Opportunities for Orchard Ownership" and discussed the Center's role in providing workshops and working with FSA to access more loans for Latino farmers and cooperatives. Much interest was expressed by many after the

presentation.

The Washington State Horticultural Association represents both shippers and growers and works to advance and enhance the tree fruit industry in Washington State.



HAPPY NEW YEAR

Inside this issue:

New FSA Director	2
Pesticide Recertification	2
Rural Development Workshop	2
Rural Youth Loans	3
Cruz Newest Staff	3
Organic Certification	3
Marketing Consultant	3
Crop Insurance Training	3
Center Nominates Guzman	3
Spanish Workshops	4



Hort Convention attendees congratulate Center's Blanca Alvitres & meet Crispin Garza from FSA

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Yakima, WA**



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Development Resources**

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Spanish Workshops in 2007

Workshop/Training	Date(s)	Time	Location
Tax Training	January 16th	6pm-8:30pm	El Conquistador Mex. Rest. 612 E Edison Ave. Sunnyside
Tax Training	January 18th	6pm-8:30pm	RCDR Small Business Incubator 22 S 3rd Ave. Yakima
Farm Real Estate Training	January 31st	6pm-8:30pm	El Conquistador Mex. Rest. 612 E Edison Ave. Sunnyside
Marketing	February 9th	12pm-3pm	Whistlers Fm Restaurant 616 S Whitcomb Ave. Tonasket
Marketing	February 28th	6pm-8:30pm	RCDR Small Business Incubator 22 S 3rd Ave. Yakima
Quickbooks	March 26th	TBA	TBA-Tonasket
Financial Management	May 4th	TBA	Whistlers Fm Rest. 616 S Whitcomb Ave. Tonasket
*Monthly Radio Show	January 18 February 15 March 15	4pm-5pm	Radio KDNA-FM 91.9

Space is limited, to register call (509) 453-3157 or (509) 453-5133





Rural Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency provides loans up to \$5,000 to individual rural youths to establish and operate income-producing projects of modest size in connection with their participation in 4-H clubs, FFA or other similar organizations. Each project must be part of an organized and supervised program of work. It must be planned and operated with the help of the organization adviser, produce sufficient income to repay the loan, and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience.

Loans may be used to buy livestock, equipment, supplies to buy, rent or repair tools and equipment and pay operating expenses for running the project. Only people who live in a town of less than 10,000 people and are from the ages of 10 to 20 are eligible to apply.

The Center is now looking to work with the children of Latino farmers and Latino farm workers on Rural Youth Loans. Please call Blanca Alvitres at (509) 453-3157 for more info.

Organic Certification

The Center continues its efforts to inform Latino farmers about the opportunities in converting to organic farming. As part of these efforts Mike Haskett, Organic Food Inspector for WSDA, was a guest on the Center's monthly KDNA radio show in December. The show focused on the organic certification process and the benefits of being an organic producer.

The Center continues to advocate organic farming practices to Latino farmers and is planning to host an Organic Certification workshop in early spring and is looking to develop at least two organic vegetable cooperatives within the region.

If you have any questions about organic certification contact the Washington State Department of Agriculture @ (360) 902-1805.

Crop Insurance Training

The Center provided a Crop Insurance training on October 3rd at RCDR's Small Business Incubator.

Jo Lynne Seufer of the Risk Management Agency (RMA) presented to area Latino farmers. Ms. Seufer continues to push and promote the importance of crop insurance for all farmers but most importantly for the family farms. The attendees learned about the programs and services, as well as different crop insurance options for their farms.

The closing dates for each crop in 2007 is as follows:

- Onions – February 1, 2007
- AGR-Lite – March 15, 2007
- Vegetables - March 15, 2007
- Tree Fruits and Grapes – November, 2007

To register or if you need advice in regard to getting crop insurance call Eliel Cruz at (509) 453-3157 or if you have any questions for Ms. Seufer call the RMA office at (509) 353-2147.

Center Nominates Jose Guzman

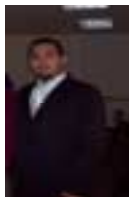
Jose Guzman a producer from Tieton was an unsuccessful candidate for the FSA County Committee election in early December. As an active member, the Center has nominated Mr. Guzman to serve as the minority advisor to the FSA County Committee.

The FSA administers USDA programs such as crop price support programs, conservation programs, disaster pro-

grams and farm loan programs. The administration of these programs is supervised by a three member County Committee elected by the eligible voters in each of three Local Administrative Areas in the County.

Mr. Guzman is interested in participating and has experience in agricultural production and understands the benefits and constraints of Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs and services. The Center feels he will be a valuable asset to the FSA County Committee.

Cruz Newest Staff



Eliel Cruz was hired as Outreach Risk Specialist in early November as a direct result of a new grant with the Risk Management Education division of the Risk Management Agency (RMA).

His duties are to provide one-on-one technical assistance and conduct risk assessment evaluations developed by Center staff to guide Latino farmers' risk management awareness and decision-making.

He has much experience and education in working with immigrant farmers, as well as strong Spanish skills. Outreach to Latino farmers is projected to increase to allow more one-on-one training.

Eric Alegria, Center Manager said; "that the addition of a risk specialist who works with farmers on all areas of risk is a step towards the future of a comprehensive approach by the Center to providing business assistance to Latino farmers." Alegria went on to say that "Eliel is a very effective communicator and a quick learner" and he is confident that "Latino farmers will benefit from his arrival." Please call 509-453-3157 if you want to discuss risk management issues and RMA programs.

Seeking Marketing Consultant

The Center is currently hiring a marketing consultant to work with the Center Manager in the development and implementation of marketing strategies for a growing cooperative based in Tonasket. United Growers Inc. is a marketing cooperative composed of small Latino farmers whose members have apples, pears and cherries.

Qualified candidates must have extensive marketing knowledge and experience in the development of local and regional markets and experience in utilizing those markets for the promotion and enhancement of cooperatives.

Bilingual/bi-literate candidates are encouraged to apply. Please fax resume and cover letter to (509) 453-5165.

NEW FSA DIRECTOR VISITS CENTER

Jack Silzel, newly appointed Wash State Director of FSA visited the Center only days after his appointment to the position in November.

Prior to accepting the FSA appointment, Silzel served more than ten years in Washington D.C. as the agriculture policy director for former Congressman George Nethercutt, and legislative director for Congresswoman Cathy McMorris.

He worked closely with the House and Senate Agriculture Committee members and staff on issues surrounding re-authorization of the farm bill. He served nine years as Senior Advisor for agriculture and rural affairs assisting the House Appropriations



Chris Bieker FSA Outreach Coordinator, Jack Silzel Newly appointed FSA Director & Eric Alegria Center Manager upon his visit to the Center office

Committee members.

A fourth generation farmer, Silzel was actively involved in his family's diversified farm operation near Oakesdale, Washington where they produced wheat, barley, lentils, dry peas Kentucky blue-grass turf seed and hogs.

Silzel will administer and manage FSA programs designed to improve the economic stability of agriculture through efficient and equitable administration of FSA programs (USDA FSA Published November 13, 2006)

Mr. Silzel indicated that he is invested in and interested in assisting with the development of small farm producers throughout Washington State such as Latino farmers. Eric Alegria, stated that the Center "looks forward to working with Mr. Silzel."

TIME TO CELEBRATE!!! 15 yrs of Community Service

The Rural Community Development Resources (RCDR) is having its gala Quinceañera celebration on Friday, January 12, 2007 from 5:30 p.m to 8:30 p.m. at the Clarion Hotel at 1507 N. 1st Street in Yakima. It will also mark the completion of 5 years of existence for Center .

The event will recognize the accomplishments of RCDR & the Center, and recognize those people that have contributed to its success. Luz Bazan Gutierrez, founder and CEO said, "Our job is easy when we have such great clients that work hard and are eager to learn and succeed." Several of the small businesses and Latino farmers will be given awards on that evening." Everyone is invited! Call (509) 453-5133.

Pesticide Re-Certification

Twenty-one farmers were present at the Pesticide-Recertification workshop held in the WSDA conference room on November 20th. Some farmers came from as far as Entiat, Wenatchee, Royal City, Othello, Mattawa, Prosser and others from near by, from cities such as Toppenish, Wapato, Sunnyside, Grandview, Cowiche and Yakima.

Michael Bush, from Washington State University Extension in Yakima (WSU), Jorge Lobos, from the pesticide division of Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) in Yakima, Tito Rodriguez Washington State Department of Health

(WSDH) and Sergio Paredes from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), gave the instruction providing information regarding pesticide education for the attendees.

For more information about Pesticide Recertification contact WSDA licensing @ (509) 225-2639.



December 6th, 2006

Rural Development Workshop

Jose Salinas and Nicolas Romero received one-on-one training provided by Randy Baird of USDA's Rural Development at RCDR's Small Business Incubator in Yakima.

The subject covered for the training was Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG), which may be used for planning activities, such as feasibility studies or business plans or to provide working capital for projects. Value-Added products are created when a producer takes an agricultural commodity, and processes or prepares it in a way that increases value to

consumers. An example, of VAPG is the establishment of new markets outside the country exporting products to Central or South America or other countries.

Renewable Energy and Cooperative Programs are also provided by Rural Development. For more information please contact Rural Development @ (509) 454-5743.

This program is one of the least accessed by minority producers because of its highly competitive nature among corporate farming and business operations.



Held in the RCDR's Small Business Incubator