

# Farm Service Agency

**Address:**

USDA Service Center  
177 N. Imperial Avenue  
El Centro CA 92251

**Telephone:**

(760) 352 3531 XT2  
Fax: (760) 352-0219

**Web Sites:**

FSA: [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)  
USDA: [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)  
Farm Bill:  
[www.usda.gov.farmbill](http://www.usda.gov.farmbill)

**Hours:**

Monday-Friday  
8:00 AM-4:30 PM

**County Committee:**

Curt Corda  
Gary Mamer  
Mike Palmer  
Raul Rodriguez, Advisor

**County Executive****Director:**

Rosalinda Singh

**Staff:**

Carmen Perez, PT  
Julia Contreras, PT  
Rogelio Araujo, PT  
Anthony Jauregui, PT

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***Imperial County***

# **FSA NEWS**

*March 2008*

## **FSA DISASTER PROGRAMS**

The "U.S. Troop Readiness, Veteran's Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007 (2007 Act) signed into law by President Bush in May, 2007 provides approximately \$3 billion in agricultural disaster aid for America's farmers and ranchers.

Specifically, the 2007 Act provides funds for a **Crop Disaster Program, Livestock Indemnity Program, and Dairy Disaster Assistance Program**. This newsletter summarizes the disaster aid programs of the 2007 Act applicable to this county.

### **Crop Disaster Program Signup**

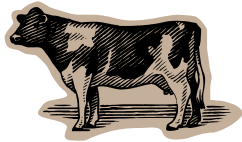
The **Crop Disaster Program (CDP)** provides benefits to farmers who suffered quantity and quality losses to 2005, 2006, or 2007 crops. CDP signup began on October 15, 2007, an ending signup date has not been established.

Losses from natural disasters may qualify for financial assistance for crops that were planted or prevented from being planted before December 31, 2007. Producers who incurred qualifying losses in 2005, 2006 or 2007 can and should apply for benefits for every year and will be paid the highest dollar amount. The calculation is complex; prices for insurable crops are not the same between all three years, eligibility may not be the same for all three years. Participants may apply for loss benefits on multiple commodities as long as the losses occurred in the same crop year.

**Only producers who obtained crop insurance coverage or coverage under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program for the year of loss will be eligible for CDP benefits.** Producers must have suffered quantity losses in excess of 35%. For most crops, the calculation will compare the production amount to the higher of the county yield or the producer's actual production history. The amount of loss in excess of 35% will be eligible for quantity payments at 42% of the payment rate.

In addition to quantity loss payments, payments for quality reductions due to eligible conditions in excess of 25% may be provided. To receive quality payments, producers must suffer an economic loss to quality-affected production of at least 25% of the expected value. If you would like to apply for CDP or have any questions regarding eligibility, feel free to call our office @ 760 352 3531 XT 2.

## **Livestock Indemnity Program**



Did you lose any livestock between January 1, 2005 and December 31, 2007 as a result of a disaster event, such as excessive moisture in 2005 or excessive heat in July of 2006? If so, you may be eligible for federal financial assistance.

The *Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)* compensates livestock producers for livestock losses between January 1, 2005, and December 31, 2007, that resulted from natural disasters.

To be eligible for LIP, a livestock producer must have legally owned the eligible livestock on the day the livestock died. The livestock must have died in an eligible county as a result of an eligible disaster event. The following are among the eligible livestock under LIP: dairy cattle, beef cattle, buffalo, beefalo, catfish, crawfish, equine, sheep, goats, swine, poultry, and deer. The livestock must not have been produced for reasons other than commercial farming.

Applicants must provide adequate proof that the eligible livestock deaths occurred in an eligible county as a direct result of an eligible disaster event during the applicable disaster period. The quantity and kind of livestock that died as a direct result of the eligible disaster event may be documented by rendering truck receipts or certificates, veterinarian records, IRS records, or any other documentation to verify the losses.

If a livestock owner does not have adequate proof of death, FSA will accept certifications of livestock deaths by third parties and the livestock owner. The certifications must be a written, signed, and dated statement.

Signups began on September 10, 2007. An ending signup date has not been established. Producers may receive a maximum of \$80,000 in LIP benefits. If you would like to apply for LIP or have any questions regarding eligibility, feel free to call our office.

## ***FARM CHANGES***

If you have bought or sold land, or if you have picked up or dropped rented land from your operation, make sure you report the changes to this office as soon as possible. You need to provide proof of ownership (deed; tax-bill) for purchased property, copies of rental agreements must be provided for rented land. Failure to maintain accurate records with FSA on all land you have an interest in can lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties. Please contact this office as soon as possible if you have any changes, updating records now will make the process easier when administering programs in the new farm bill.

## **Dairy Disaster Assistance Program (DDAP III)**



Eligible dairy producers who suffered losses during 2005, 2006, or 2007 may now apply to receive benefits under the Dairy Disaster Assistance Program III (DDAP III) beginning March 5. The final rule published in the Federal Register on March 4 specifies that **this newly reopened sign up period ends on May 5, 2008.**

FSA began enrolling producers in DDAP III in late 2007. Then in early 2008 FSA temporarily halted sign up pending the completion of rulemaking. Based on public comments on the program elicited during this suspension, FSA made minor changes to the DDAP III rules.

To be eligible, a producer's operation must be in a county designated a major disaster or emergency area by the president or declared a natural disaster area by the secretary of agriculture between January 1, 2005 and December 31, 2007. Producers in contiguous counties are also eligible. Further eligibility is possible if an FSA Administrator's Physical Loss Notice was issued. For further information, contact our office or visit our website at: [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

## ***HEL/WC COMPLIANCE***

Operators are reminded that in order to receive payments, compliance with Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions are required. Farmers with HEL soils need to be aware of tillage, crop residue, and rotation requirements as specified in your conservation plan. Contact NRCS if you have any questions about your conservation plan. Don't wait until after you plowed the ground to find out if you are out of compliance. Also, it is very important that you contact this office before modifying (tiling, draining, dredging, filling or leveling) any wetland or drainage ditch. Failure to obtain advance approval for any of these situations can result in loss of all Federal payments and eligibility.

## ***FOREIGN BUYERS NOTIFICATION***

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. FSA administers this program for USDA. Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form could result in civil penalties of up to 25% of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, realtors, attorneys & others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

## HONEY LOANS

Marketing assistance loans and loan deficiency payments for 2007 crop year honey are available until March 31, 2008. The national loan rate for honey is \$0.60 per pound. Market prices currently exceed the loan rate, so LDPs are not available at this time.

To be eligible for a loan, the producer must have produced honey in the United States during the calendar year for which the loan is requested, and extracted the honey on or before Dec. 31 of the applicable crop year; have continuous beneficial interest in the honey through date of repayment of the loan; and been responsible for the financial risk of keeping. Producers are responsible for maintaining the quality of farm-stored honey during the term of the loan.

The honey must be produced in the United States by an eligible producer, from an approved floral source, and stored in approved containers. The containers must be marked with the producer's name, type of honey, number of container and net weight. Pre-loan inspections are required before the loans can be disbursed. Honey used as collateral may not be disposed of without approval of the county office staff.

## SODBUSTER, SWAMPBUSTER



Most Farm Service Agency programs require compliance with sodbuster and swampbuster provisions. These provisions require producers to follow an approved conservation system on all highly erodible land planted to an annual crop as determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Be sure to have determinations made on any new land you plan to plant to annual crops. If you plan to plant a different crop on your current cropland, check with NRCS to assure the new crop will qualify under your conservation system.

Swampbuster provisions state that converting a wetland to make possible the planting of a crop will result in the loss of all USDA benefits. To avoid this possibility it is strongly recommended that producers check with NRCS before starting to work in the fields.

**SPOUSAL SIGNATURES-HUSBANDS & WIVES MAY SIGN DOCUMENTS ON BEHALF OF EACH OTHER FOR FSA AND CCC PROGRAMS IN WHICH EITHER HAS AN INTEREST. THIS OPTION IS AUTOMATICALLY AVAILABLE UNLESS A WRITTEN REQUEST FOR EXCLUSION IS MADE TO THE COUNTY OFFICE BY EITHER SPOUSE.**

## 2008 ACREAGE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Filing an accurate and timely acreage report for all crops/commodities and land uses can prevent loss of benefits for programs listed in the following table. The 2008 acreage reporting deadline for small grains was **March 15, 2008**. The 2008 deadline for hay, corn, fruits, vegetables and all other crops is **July 15, 2008**.

Benefit	Ac. Reporting Requirement	Reason for Requirement
Loans & LDP's	All cropland on the farm	Needed to determine reasonableness of claimed production. Required by FSRIA of 2002
NAP	Crop acreage or commodity for which NAP benefits may be requested. (Rpt Date for NAP is July 15 or 15 days before onset of harvest)	Needed to establish eligibility of the crop or commodity and producer for NAP benefits
Commodity Programs	All cropland on the farm	Required by program

## COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION



Gary Mamer was recently re-elected to the Imperial County FSA Committee. Gary represents that part of the Imperial Valley north of Keystone Road. His 3-year term began January 1, 2008. Fred Singh will serve as first alternate. Thank you to all who participated in this very important event.

## DIRECT DEPOSIT REQUIREMENTS

As of January 1, 1999 all FSA payments are to be electronically transferred into your bank account. In order to make timely payments, you need to notify this office if you close or change your account information, or if another financial institution purchases your bank. Payments can be delayed if we are not aware of changes to your account and routing number.

## FSA FARM LOANS

FSA makes both direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans to family-size farmers and ranchers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank or other lender, including loans to beginning farmers & ranchers, socially disadvantaged applicants and youth loans. FSA loans can be used to purchase land, livestock, equipment, feed, seed and supplies. The loans can also be used to construct buildings or make farm improvements. If you're having trouble getting commercial credit, call FSA @ 661-336-0967 XT2 or you may also visit our website for more information.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
 Farm Service Agency  
 Imperial County FSA Office  
 177 North Imperial Avenue  
 El Centro CA 92243

Dates to Remember	
March 15, 2008	Deadline to report small grains
May 5, 2008	Deadline to file for DDAP III
May 26, 2008	Office Closed – Memorial Day
July 4, 2008	Office Closed-Independence Day
July 15, 2008	Deadline to report all crops other than Small grains

This office would like to acknowledge the following farmers that passed in 2007: John Flammang, Robert Monte, Melton Huffman, Bob Robinson, David Manwaring. FSA appreciates each of their contributions to agriculture.  
 Please forgive any unintended omissions.

**SPECIAL ACCOMODATIONS**

Special accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impaired, or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, please call our office at (760) 352-3531.

**CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINT PROCESS**

Any person, class or group of persons may file a discrimination complaint within 180 days of an alleged discriminatory action. Complaints may be filed in writing or orally with the agency head, any designated agency official or the Secretary of Agriculture, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. Assistance in filing a complaint can be obtained by calling or visiting any FSA office.

*The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance programs. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202)-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*