

July 2014



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Imperial County FSA Updates

Imperial County FSA Office

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Website:

www.fsa.usda.gov

County Committee:

Gilbert Gonzalez, Chair
Manuel Castro, Vice-Chair
Craig Alameda, Reg. Mbr.

County Executive Director:

Rosalinda Singh

Program Technicians:

Carmen Perez
Julia Contreras

COC NOMINATION DEADLINE

The Imperial County Committee is now accepting nominations for the 2014 County Committee election for the Bard/Winterhaven/Palo Verde area, also known as Local Administrative Area (LAA) 3.

County committee members are a critical component of the operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers and ranchers who serve on county committees help with the decisions necessary to administer the programs in their counties. They work to ensure FSA agricultural programs serve the needs of local producers.

FSA county committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws. County committee members apply their judgment and knowledge to make local decisions.

The COC nomination period runs from June 17, 2014 through August 1, 2014. The nomination form is available at USDA Service Centers and [online](#). For more information contact your local FSA office.

SAVE TIME – MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH FSA

Jamie Duggan-Lara, Intern

Farm Loan Staff:

(located in Bakersfield)

Tom Hunton

Elsa Mora

Ph: 661.336.0967 XT2

Next County Committee

Meeting: September 24, 9AM

(subject to change)

As we roll out the Farm Bill programs administered by FSA, there will be related signups and in some cases multiple management decisions that need to be made by you, the producer, in consult with FSA staff. To insure maximum use of your time and to insure that you are afforded our full attention to your important business needs, please call our office ahead of your visit to arrange an appointment and to discuss any records or documentation that you may need to have with you when you arrive for your appointment. For local FSA Service Center contact information, please visit: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

2012 & 2013 ELAP LOSSES MUST BE FILED BY AUG. 1, 2014 FOR HONEYBEE, LIVESTOCK AND FARM-RAISED FISH LOSSES

Producers who suffered eligible livestock, honeybee or farm-raised fish losses have until August 1, 2014, to submit a notice of loss and application for payment under the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP).

ELAP provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish that have losses due to disease, adverse weather, or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires. ELAP assistance is provided for losses not covered by the Livestock Forage Program (LFP) and Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP). Producers who suffered eligible livestock, honeybee or farm-raised fish losses during 2012 and 2013 program years must submit a notice of loss and application for payment to their local FSA office by August 1, 2014. For 2014 program year losses, the notice of loss and an application for payment must be submitted by November 1, 2014.

For more information, producers can review the ELAP Fact Sheet on the [Farm Bill webpage](#). Producers are encouraged to make an appointment with their local FSA office to apply for these programs.

NEW FARM BILL OFFERS INCREASED OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRODUCERS

The 2014 Farm Bill offers increased opportunities for producers including farm loan program modifications that create flexibility for new and existing farmers. A fact sheet outlining modifications to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan Programs is available [here](#).

The Farm Bill expands lending opportunities for thousands of farmers and ranchers to begin and continue operations, including greater flexibility in determining eligibility, raising loan limits, and emphasizing beginning and socially disadvantaged producers.

Changes that will take effect immediately include:

- Elimination of the 15 year term limit for guaranteed operating loans.
- Modification of the definition of beginning farmer, using the average farm size for the county as a qualifier instead of the median farm size.
- Modification of the Joint Financing Direct Farm Ownership Interest Rate to 2 percent less than regular Direct Farm Ownership rate, with a floor of 2.5 percent. Previously, the rate was established at 5 percent.
- Increase of the maximum loan amount for Direct Farm Ownership Down Payment Loan Program from \$225,000 to \$300,000.

- Elimination of rural residency requirement for Youth Loans, allowing urban youth to benefit.
- Debt forgiveness on Youth Loans, which will not prevent borrowers from obtaining additional loans from the federal government.
- Increase of the guaranteed percentage on Conservation Loans from 75 to 80 percent and 90 percent for socially disadvantaged borrowers and beginning farmers.
- Microloans will not count toward direct operating loan term limits for veterans and beginning farmers.

Additional modifications must be implemented through the rulemaking processes. Visit the FSA Farm Bill website for detailed information and updates to farm loan programs.

HIGHLY ERODIBLE LAND AND WETLAND COMPLIANCE

Landowners and operators are reminded that in order to receive payments from USDA, they must be compliant with Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions. Farmers with HEL determined soils must apply tillage, crop residue and rotation requirements as specified in their conservation plan.

Producers should notify FSA prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to ensure compliance. If you intend to clear any trees to create new cropland, these areas will need to be reviewed to ensure any work will not jeopardize your eligibility for benefits.

Landowners and operators can complete form AD-1026 Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification to determine whether a referral to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is necessary.

For more information on Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation provisions, contact a FSA County Office or visit the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov.

IMPORTANT DATES

AUGUST 1 - DEADLINE TO FILE NOMINATION FORM WITH THIS OFFICE FOR COMMITTEE ELECTION

AUGUST 1 - DEADLINE TO FILE FOR ELAP

SEPTEMBER 1 - OFFICE CLOSED - FEDERAL HOLIDAY

SEPTEMBER 24 - NEXT COUNTY COMMITTEE MEETING (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

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