

December 2013



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Kings County FSA Updates

Kings County FSA Office

680 Campus Drive Suite C
Hanford, CA 93230

Phone: 559-585-8732
Fax: 559-584-8715

Website:

www.fsa.usda.gov

Office Hours:
8:00 am - 4:30 pm

County Executive Director:

Kathy L Sargent

Program Technicians:

Joan Avila
Winifred Brogan
Lillian Hernandez
Nathan Olson

Farm Loan Manager:

(Located in Visalia Office)
Tom Roberts

Farm Loan Staff:

Patricia Miller
Slade Childers

Visalia Phone: 559-734-8732

NEW COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION BALLOTS TO BE MAILED

The County Committee Election ballots that were mailed to producers on Nov. 4 were incorrectly printed with the producer's name and address on the back of the ballot. County committee elections must use a secret ballot so the misprinted ballots cannot be used. Please destroy or recycle the misprinted ballot. If you have already voted, your ballot will be destroyed unopened.

New ballots will be mailed to producers on December 20, 2013. These ballots will indicate that they are the corrected ballot in several places, including on the outside of the mailing, on the ballot, and on the outside of the return envelope.

The corrected ballot must be returned to the Kings County FSA Office or postmarked by January 17, 2014. All newly elected county committee members will take office February 18, 2014. All county committee members whose term expires on Dec. 31, 2013, will have their term extended to January 31, 2014.

County committee members are an important component of the operations of FSA and provide a link between the agricultural community and USDA. Farmers and ranchers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity price support programs; conservation programs; incentive indemnity and disaster programs for some commodities; emergency programs and eligibility. FSA committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm may also be eligible to vote.

Next County Committee Meeting:
January 22, 2014 at 9:00 AM

This year's election covers the Lemoore/Stratford/Avenal area of the county. Candidates are Ronda Brooks and Ceil Howe III. Voters are reminded that each voter must sign their own ballot before returning. Power of Attorney forms which are accepted for other FSA programs do not apply to ballots for County Committee Elections.

FSA SIGNATURE POLICY



Using the correct signature when doing business with FSA can save time and prevent a delay in program benefits. The following are FSA signature guidelines:

- Spouses may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and CCC programs in which either has an interest, unless written notification denying a spouse this authority has been provided to the county office
- Spouses shall not sign on behalf of each other as an authorized signatory for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations, or other similar entities.

For additional clarification on proper signatures contact our office.

2014 ACREAGE REPORTING DATES

Producers now have until January 15, 2014, to report crops that had a December 15, 2013, reporting deadline without paying a late-file fee. Crops under this waiver include perennial forage, such as alfalfa hay. In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to contact the Kings County FSA office to arrange an appointment to file an accurate crop certification report by applicable deadlines. The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for Kings County:

December 15, 2013: Perennial Forage (including Alfalfa Hay)

Perennial Forage such as Alfalfa may be reported until January 15, 2014 without late-file fee

January 2, 2014: Honey

January 15, 2014: Sugar Beets, Potatoes, Citrus

March 15, 2014: Wheat, Barley, Oats

May 15, 2014: Table Grapes

June 15, 2014: Forage Seeding: Sudan, ryegrass (all annually planted spring-seeded forage crops)

July 15, 2014: Spring Seeded Barley & Oats, Corn, Cotton, Grain Sorghum, Onions, Safflower, Tomatoes, and all other crops and land uses

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

FSA ADVISES PRODUCERS TO ANTICIPATE PAYMENT REDUCTIONS DUE TO MANDATED SEQUESTER

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is reminding farmers and ranchers who participate in FSA programs to plan accordingly in FY2014 for automatic spending reductions known as sequestration. The Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA) mandates that federal agencies implement automatic, annual reductions to discretionary and mandatory spending limits. For mandatory programs, the sequestration rate for FY2014 is 7.2%. Accordingly, FSA is implementing sequestration for the following programs:

- Marketing Assistance Loans
- Loan Deficiency Payments
- Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program
- 2013 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payments
- 2013 Average Crop Revenue Election Program

These sequester percentages reflect current law estimates; however with the continuing budget uncertainty, Congress still may adjust the exact percentage reduction. Today's announcement intends to help producers plan for the impact of sequestration cuts in FY2014.

At this time, FSA is required to implement the sequester reductions. Due to the expiration of the Farm Bill on September 30, FSA does not have the flexibility to cover these payment reductions in the same manner as in FY13. FSA will provide notification as early as practicable on the specific payment reductions.

For information about FSA programs, visit our office or go to www.fsa.usda.gov

BEGINNING FARMER LOANS

FSA assists beginning farmers to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's median size.

For additional program information, loan applications, and other materials, please contact the Farm Loan Team located in the Visalia USDA Service Center. The phone number is (559) 734-8732. You may also visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

DATES TO REMEMBER

December 25 - Christmas Day Office Closed

January 1, 2014 - New Year's Day Office Closed

January 2 - Crop Reporting deadline for Honey

January 15 - Crop Reporting deadline for Sugar beets, potatoes, citrus and extended deadline for perennial forage, including alfalfa

March 1 - 2014 NAP application closing date for Annuals (Green Beans, Herbs, Squash, Carrots, Peppers, Broccoli, Brussel Sprouts, etc...)

March 15 - Crop Reporting deadline for Wheat, Barley, Oats and most non-citrus fruit and nut crops

May 15 - Grapes

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).