

December 2013



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Los Angeles-Orange-San Bernardino County FSA Updates

**Los Angeles, Orange,
San Bernardino County
FSA Office**

New County Committee Election Ballots To Be Mailed

Address:

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Telephone

Phone: 661-942-9549
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County Executive Director
Douglas Brand

Program Technician
Marilynn Wells

Farm Loan Manager
(Located in Bakersfield)
Thomas Hunton
661-336-0967 ext. 116

Farm Loan Technician
(Located in Bakersfield)
Elsa Mora
661-336-0967 ext. 118

County Committee
Paul Johnson
Patricia Van Dam
Bennie Moore, Jr.
Dan Manassero

Advisor
Basilio Dorado

The County Committee Election ballots that were mailed to producers on November 4th 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 Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino County FSA Office or postmarked by **January 17, 2014**. The ballots will be counted on January 24, 2014. All newly elected county committee members will take office February 18, 2014. All county committee members whose term expires on December 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.

The area served by the Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino County FSA

Next County Committee Meeting Scheduled For January 24, 2014

Committee is divided into four Local Administrative Areas (LAAs). One member on the committee represents each LAA and serves a 3-year term. This year, LAA #1 (high Desert area of San Bernardino County) is up for election.

Office Hours

8:00 am - 4:30 pm
Monday through Friday

The candidates for this year's election (LAA #1) are:

Susan Harter
Paul Johnson.

More information on county committees, such as the new 2013 fact sheet and brochures, can be found on the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections or at a local USDA Service Center.

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:

- Dairy Indemnity Payment Program;
- Marketing Assistance Loans;
- Loan Deficiency Payments;
- Sugar Loans;
- Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program;
- Tobacco Transition Payment Program;
- 2013 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payments;
- 2013 Average Crop Revenue Election Program;
- 2011 and 2012 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program;
- Storage, handling; and Economic Adjustment Assistance for upland cotton

Conservation Reserve Program payments are specifically exempt by statute from sequestration, thus these payments will not be reduced.

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 your county USDA Service Center or go to www.fsa.usda.gov/.

2014 Acreage Reporting Dates

Producers now have until January 15, 2014, to report crops that have a November 15, 2013, or December 15, 2013, reporting deadline without paying a late-file fee. Crops under this waiver include wheat and native and improved grasses intended for grazing or haying. The Risk Management Agency (RMA) did not grant a waiver so

producers need to consult their crop insurance agent for deadlines for insured crops.

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit the Name County FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for Los Angeles, Orange, and San Bernardino Counties:

December 15, 2013: Perennial Forage

January 2, 2014: NAP Honey (Hive Count)

January 15, 2014: Strawberries, Avocadoes, Blueberries, Citrus

March 15, 2014: Wheat, Almonds, Apples, Barely, Cherries, Apriocots, Peaches, Nectarines, Pears, Plums

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 calendars days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.
- If a perennial forage crop is reported with the intended use of "cover only," "green manure," "left standing," or "seed," then the acreage must be reported by July 15th.

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.

Additionally, producers can purchase both NAP and RMA coverage for 2014 annual forage crops. NAP coverage will not be available for 2015 annual forage crops.

Late file fees will be assessed for 2013 crops reported after September 15, 2013, and 2014 crops reported after January 15, 2014.

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact the Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino County FSA office at 661 942-9549 ext. 2.

MicroLoan Program

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) developed the Microloan (ML) program to better serve the unique financial operating needs of beginning, niche and small family farm operations.

FSA offers applicants a Microloan designed to help farmers with credit needs of \$35,000 or less. The loan features a streamlined application process built to fit the needs of new and smaller producers. This loan program will also be useful to specialty crop producers and operators of community supported agriculture (CSA).

Eligible applicants can apply for a maximum amount of \$35,000 to pay for initial start-up expenses such as hoop houses to extend the growing season, essential tools, irrigation and annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents, marketing, and distribution expenses. As financing needs increase, applicants can apply for a regular operating loan up to the maximum amount of \$300,000 or obtain financing from a commercial lender under FSA's Guaranteed Loan Program.

Individuals who are interested in applying for a microloan or would like to discuss other farm loan programs

available should call Tom Hunton in the Bakersfield FSA Office at 661 336-0967 ext 118.

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).