

December 2013



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Merced/Mariposa County FSA Updates

Merced County FSA Office

Office Location:

2926 G Street, Suite 103
Merced, CA 95340-2110

Contact Information:

Phone (209)722-4119 ext. 2
Fax (209)722-0974

Hours:

Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

County Committee (COC):

Arthur W. Richards, Chair
RoseAnn Serrano, Vice Chair
Simon Vander Woude, Member
Pasquale Palazzo, Member
Jose D.Vazquez, Advisor

Farm Program Staff:

Garrett Pedretti, CED
Lydia Swilley, PT
Gizela Gover, PT
Lenai Mull, PT

New County Committee Election Ballots

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 have been mailed. 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.

Only voting districts 3 and 4 have members with terms expiring in this election; therefore, only the producers in those districts will receive ballots.

The corrected ballot must be returned to the Merced 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

Tina Frey, PT

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.

Farm Loan Staff:

LaVon Treasure, FLM
Aileen Garcia, FLO
Laura Westerfield, FLOT
Phyllis Boyle, PT

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.

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 Merced County FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for Merced County:

January 2, 2014	NAP honey
January 15, 2014	Perennial forage (e.g. rye, orchard grass, Bermuda grass, alfalfa)
January 15, 2014	Strawberries planted 8/16 - 11/15/2013 Avocados, blueberries, grapefruit, lemons, mandarins, Minneola tangelos, navel oranges, Orlando tangelos, sweet oranges, Valencia oranges, and sugar beets planted 9/1-12/13/2013.
March 15, 2014	Alfalfa seed, wheat (fall and spring), almonds, apples, barley (fall), cherries, figs, apricots (FR and PR), freestone peaches (FR and PR), nectarines (FR), oats (fall), pears, plums, cling peaches (PR), prunes.
May 15, 2014	Grapes and table grapes.
June 15, 2014	Forage for seed crops Strawberries all other plant dates.
July 15, 2014 wild	Alfalfa seed (spring), barley (spring), corn, cotton (Upland and ELS), cultivated rice, dry beans, tomatoes (FR and PR), grain sorghum, mint, oats (spring), onions, rice, safflower, and all other crops except raisins. Strawberries (all other plant dates).
July 31, 2014	Raisins

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.

* 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 15, 2014.

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. 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 Merced County FSA office at (209)722-4119.

Emergency Loans - Secretarial Natural Disaster Designations

As a result of these designations, the counties listed are eligible for Farm Service Agency (FSA) Emergency (EM) loans for eligible family farmers.

The following current disaster designations have been declared by the Secretary of Agriculture:

Date Declared: 04/24/2013

Designation Code: S3511

Disaster Description: Merced, Madera, and Mariposa Counties have been named eligible for USDA emergency farm loans because of physical and production losses based on damages and losses caused by drought, which occurred February 26, 2013, through April 22, 2013.

Final Date to Apply: 12/24/2013

Date Declared: 07/03/2013

Designation Code: S3547

Disaster Description: Merced, Madera, and Mariposa Counties have been named eligible for USDA emergency farm loans because of physical and production losses based on damages and losses caused by drought, which occurred on May 5, 2013, through July 1, 2013.

Final Date to Apply: 03/03/2014

Date Declared: 07/31/2013

Designation Code: S3558

Disaster Description: Merced County has been named eligible for USDA emergency farm loans because of physical and production losses based on damages and losses caused by drought, which occurred on June 4, 2013, through July 29, 2013.

Final Date to Apply: 03/31/2014

Some of the eligibility requirements are as follows:

- Have suffered at least a 30 percent loss of normal production directly related to the cited cause,
- Be able to repay the loan and any other loans,
- Be Unable to obtain credit elsewhere,
- Have adequate security,
- Have multi-peril crop insurance, if available, and
- Meet all other eligibility criteria.

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 your local FSA office.

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).