

January 2013



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Tulare County FSA Updates

County Committee Election Results

Tulare County
FSA Office
3530 W. Orchard Ct
Visalia, CA 93277

559-734-8732 Ext. 2 ph
559-732-2805 fax

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

County Committee
Craig Ainley
Alex Garcia
Mark Heuer

County Office Staff
Theresa Barajas, PT
Slade Childers, FL PT
Ruth Ford, COT
Becky Garcia, CPT
Pat Miller, FLO
Yvonne Newman, PT
Danielle Parreira, PT
Kelly Solis, PT
Lorraine Wilson, PT

Farm Loan Manager
Tom Roberts

County Executive Director
Kaye Rydberg

Congratulations to Mark Heuer and Alex Garcia. Mark was re-elected to represent LAA 2 and Alex was elected to represent LAA 3.

FSA appreciates all of the voters for taking the time to complete the election ballot. The county committee system works only because of your participation.

The committee members will hold their organizational meeting in January to determine who will serve as the county committee chairman and vice-chairman.

Hispanic and Women Farmer and Rancher Claims Period

Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA in past decades can file claims until March 25, 2013.

The process offers a voluntary alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or female farmer and rancher who can prove that USDA denied their applications for loan or loan servicing assistance for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000.

As announced in February 2011, the voluntary claims process will make available at least \$1.33 billion for cash awards and tax relief payments, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief to eligible Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers. There are no filing fees to participate in the program.

USDA will continue reaching out to potential Hispanic and female claimants, around the country to inform those who may be eligible for this program.

Website: www.farmerclaims.gov

Phone: 1-888-508-4429

Dates to Remember
Jan. 1 FSA Offices closed,

Federal Holiday

Deadline for Claims: March 25, 2013.

Jan. 21 FSA Offices closed,
Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday

Claimants can obtain a claims package in the mail by calling 1-888-509-4429 or by visiting the website www.farmerclaims.gov . Public meetings are also being held in many areas to share further information. Contact your nearest FSA office to get a schedule of meetings in your area.

Mar. 1 NAP 2013 closing for all annual crops

Mar 15 Crop Reporting date for:
Alfalfa Seed, Almonds,
Apples, Barley, Cherries,
Figs, Fresh Freestone
Peaches, Fresh Nectarines,
Pears, Plums, Processing
Apricots, Processing Cling
Peaches, Processing
Freestone Peaches, Prunes
Walnuts

FSA Signature Policy

Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office staff by either spouse.

There are exceptions to the rule. Spouses may not sign on behalf of each other for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities.

Mar. 25 Hispanic and Women
Farmer and Rancher Claims
Period ends

Individual signatures are also required on certain Farm Loan Program and Farm Storage Facility Loan documents.

Mar. 31 MAL deadline for
wheat and oats.

For more clarification on spousal signature authority, contact your our office.

Marketing Assistance Loans (MAL)

Short-term financing is available through FSA's low interest commodity loans for eligible harvested production. A nine-month Marketing Assistance Loan provides financing that allows producers to store production for later marketing at a potentially better price. The crop may be stored on farm or in a warehouse.

Loans are available for producers who share in the risk of producing the eligible commodity and maintain beneficial interest in the crop through the duration of the loan. Beneficial interest means retaining the ability to make decisions about the commodity, responsibility for loss because of damage to the commodity and title to the commodity. Once beneficial interest in a commodity is lost, it is ineligible for a loan, even if you regain beneficial interest.

The deadline to request a grain loan is March 31, 2013, for wheat and oats and May 31, 2013, for corn, soybeans and sorghum. Contact a member of the farm program staff for more information.

Beginning and Limited Resource Farmers

FSA assists beginning farmers and members of socially disadvantaged groups 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 that 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.

Additional program information, loan applications and other materials are available at our office. You may contact a farm loan specialist or you may also visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

Select Interest Rates for January 2013

Farm Operating - Direct 1.250%; Farm Ownership - Direct 3.125%; Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher 1.50%; Emergency Loan - Actual Loss 2.25%

Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their purchases or sales of property to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA.

All individuals who are not U.S. citizens, and 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 (FSA-153) could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9450, or call toll-free at (866) 632-9992 (English) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (English Federal-relay) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Federal-relay).