

March 2013



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Ely FSA Office Updates

DEAR PRODUCERS: Welcome to the new GovDelivery bulletins and updates service from your Ely FSA office. Please note that you are welcome to request to receive bulletins from more than one state and/or county and can add or remove individual subscriptions at any time.

USDA - Ely Service Ctr. Ely FSA Office

744 E North Industrial Way
Ely, NV 89301-9402

Phone: 775 289 4990
Fax: 775 289 6629
Hours: 8:00 am - 4:30 pm
Monday -
Thursday

www.fsa.usda.gov/NV

County Committee:

Annette Harris	Chairperson
Don Phillips	Vice-Chair
Daren Jensen	Member
Lee Mathews	Member
Kelly Miller	Member

FSA Staff:

Claire Kehoe, CED	Ext 100
Elko 738 6445	Ext 106
Vi Braden, PT	Ext
101	
Micki Wines, FLO	
Elko 738 6445	Ext 105

NRCS Office:

HC 33 Box 33451
Ely, NV 89301-9402

Phone: 775
289 4065

Of Interest in this Issue:

- 3 Counties and Carson City Designated as Primary Natural Disaster Areas with Assistance to Surrounding Areas
- NAP Grazing Losses
- DCP / ACRE Sign-up Continues
- 45th CRP General Sign-Up
- Hay Net
- NRCS -- Now is the Time to Plan
- Microloan Program
- HWFRCP Claims Deadline -- March 25th
- Loans for Socially Disadvantaged
- Beginning and Limited Resource Farmers
- Interest Rates and Deadlines

USDA Designates 3 Counties and Carson City as Primary Natural Disaster Areas with Assistance to Surrounding Areas

The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has designated three counties and an independent city in Nevada as primary natural disaster areas due to damages and losses caused by the recent drought. These counties are:

Douglas

Esmeralda

White Pine

Independent City:

Carson City

Fax: 775 289
6629

NRCS Staff:

Cory Lytle, DC Ext
105

Reid Kelly, SC Ext 109

Ed Sturges, SCT Ext 112

Nicole Bolton, Ag Eng Ext 108

Tyrel Brown, SGI Ext 110

"Our hearts go out to those Nevada farmers and ranchers affected by recent natural disasters," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "President Obama and I are committed to ensuring that agriculture remains a bright spot in our nation's economy by sustaining the successes of America's farmers, ranchers, and rural communities through these difficult times. We're also telling Nevada producers that USDA stands with you and your communities when severe weather and natural disasters threaten to disrupt your livelihood."

Farmers and ranchers in the following **Nevada Counties** also qualify for natural disaster assistance because their counties are contiguous. These counties are:

Elko	Lincoln	Mineral	Storey
Eureka	Lyon	Nye	Washoe

Farmers and ranchers in the following **California Counties** also qualify for natural disaster assistance because their counties are contiguous. These counties are:

Alpine	El Dorado	Inyo	Mono	Placer
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All counties listed above were designated natural disaster areas February 27, 2013, making them all qualified farm operators in the designated areas eligible for low interest emergency (EM) loans from USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. FSA has a variety of programs, in addition to the EM loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity.

The Obama Administration remains committed to helping the thousands of farm families and businesses struggling with natural disasters. Actions taken by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack in 2012 to provide assistance to producers impacted by the drought include:

- Extended emergency grazing on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres, freeing up a record 2.8 million acres and as much as \$200 million in forage and feed for ranchers during a challenging time.
- Purchased \$170 million of pork, lamb, chicken, and catfish for federal food nutrition assistance programs, including food banks, to help relieve pressure on American livestock producers and bring the nation's meat supply in line with demand.
- Reduced the emergency loan rate from 3.75 percent to 2.125 percent, as well as making emergency loans available earlier in the season.
- Allowing haying or grazing of cover crops without impacting the insurability of planted 2013 spring crops.
- USDA worked with crop insurance companies to provide flexibility to farmers, and one-third of all policyholders took advantage of the extended payment period.
- Authorized \$16 million in existing funds from the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to target states experiencing exceptional and extreme drought.
- Transferred \$14 million in unobligated program funds into the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) to help farmers and ranchers rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters and for carrying out emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought.
- Authorized haying and grazing of Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) easement areas in drought-affected areas where haying and grazing is consistent with conservation of wildlife habitat and wetlands.
- Lowered the penalty on CRP acres used for emergency haying or grazing from 25 percent to 10 percent in 2012.
- Simplified the Secretarial disaster designation process and reduced the time it takes to designate

counties affected by disasters by 40 percent.

Additional programs available to assist farmers and ranchers include the Emergency Conservation Program, Federal Crop Insurance, and the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program. Interested farmers may contact their local USDA Service Centers for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs. Additional information is also available online at: <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>.

Secretary Vilsack also reminds producers that Congress has not funded the five disaster assistance programs authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill. These are SURE; the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP); the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP); the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP); and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP). Production losses due to disasters occurring after September 30, 2011, are not eligible for disaster program coverage.

FSA news releases are available on FSA's website at: www.fsa.usda.gov via the "Newsroom" link.

NAP Grazing Losses

The irrigated and non-irrigated grazing losses for White Pine, Lincoln and Southeast Nye Counties for the Non-Insured Crop Assistance Program (NAP) are as follows:

White Pine		Lincoln		Southeast Nye	
Irrigated	41.0%	Irrigated	20.5%	Irrigated	14.0%
Non-Irrigated	54.4%	Non-Irrigated	45.0%	Non-Irrigated	56.1%

DCP / ACRE Sign-up Continues

DCP and ACRE signups for the 2013 crops are on-going. The DCP sign-up period will end August 2, 2013; and the ACRE sign-up period will end June 3, 2013.

The 2013 DCP and ACRE program provisions are unchanged from 2012, except that all eligible participants in 2013 may choose to enroll in either DCP or ACRE for the 2013 crop year. This means that eligible producers who were enrolled in ACRE in 2012 may elect to enroll in DCP in 2013 or may re-enroll in ACRE in 2013. Likewise, producers who were enrolled in DCP may opt for ACRE enrollment.

Read more about DCP and ACRE or contact the FSA County Office for more information, or an appointment to enroll.

45th CRP General Sign-Up

USDA will conduct a four-week general sign-up for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), commencing May 20th and ending June 14th. CRP protects the nation's natural resources through voluntary participation, while providing significant economic and environmental benefits to rural communities across the United States.

Currently about 27 million acres are enrolled in CRP. Producers that are accepted in the sign-up can receive cost-share assistance to plant long-term, resource-conserving covers and receive an annual rental payment for the length of the contract (10-15) years.

Contracts on 3.3 million acres of CRP are set to expire on September 30, 2013. Producers with expiring contracts or producers with environmentally sensitive land are encouraged to evaluate their options under CRP.

For more information on CRP and other FSA programs, visit a local FSA service center or www.fsa.usda.gov.

Hay Net

Producers are encouraged to use Hay Net on the FSA website (www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet). This online service allows producers with hay and those who need hay to post ads so they can make connections. Hay Net is a popular site for farmers and ranchers who have an emergency need. Individual ads can be posted free of charge by producers who complete a simple registration form the first time they use the site.

NRCS -- Now is the Time to Plan

NRCS offers financial assistance along with technical assistance to help producers address natural resource concerns on working agricultural lands. These programs can be split into three groups, environmental improvement programs, stewardship programs, and easement programs.

In order to evaluate resources concerns on your farm or ranch, NRCS field employees visit with producer and complete an on-farm, ranch evaluation of the producer's resource needs and concerns. Through this evaluation and planning, NRCS is then able to provide the producer with alternatives to address the identified resource concerns. After this initial evaluation period, the producer can decide if there is an NRCS program that meets his/her needs and may be able to assist with addressing the identified resource concerns.

Conservation programs administered by the NRCS under the Farm Bill help people reduce soil erosion, enhance water supplies, improve water quality, increase wildlife habitat, and reduce damages caused by floods and other natural disasters. Public benefits include enhanced natural resources that help sustain agricultural productivity and environmental quality while supporting continued economic development, recreation, and scenic beauty.

NRCS in Nevada offers a number of conservation programs which provide financial assistance to landowners as well as a number of programs which offer technical assistance.

The Farm Bill programs available through NRCS are voluntary programs that allow the agricultural producer to customize his/her needs to the program(s) available. You can sign up for NRCS programs at any time. However, by law, NRCS closes application periods so that the current applications can be processed and funded.

Contact the Ely Field Office staff at 775-289-4065 Cory Lytle, District Conservationist at ext. 105, Reid Kelly, Soil Conservationist at ext. 109, and Ed Sturges, Soil Conservation Technician at ext. 112. Or stop by at 744 E. North Industrial Way, Ely, NV.

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 interested in applying for a microloan or who would like to discuss other farm loan programs available, should contact the local FSA office to set up an appointment with a loan approval official.

HWFRCP Claims Deadline March 25

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack reminds Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA in the past decades that the filing period will close March 25, 2013. USDA urges potential claimants to contact the Claims Administrator for information and mail their claim packages on or before the deadline.

The process offers a voluntary alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or female farmer and rancher who can prove that USDA denied his or her application 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 in the program.

Claimants may register for a claims package by calling the telephone number below Monday through Friday 9:00 am to 8:00 pm Eastern Time or by downloading the forms from the website.

Website: www.farmerclaims.gov

Phone: 1 888 508 4429

Claims Period: September 24, 2012 - March 25, 2013.

An independent adjudicator will administer the claims process and adjudicate the claims. Although there are no legal filing fees to participate and a lawyer is not required to participate in the claims process, persons seeking legal advice may contact a lawyer or other legal services provider. Legal resources ready to assist nationwide can be found at www.nationalaglawcenter.org

Loans for Socially Disadvantaged

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. Loans are available for operational needs or to help purchase or improve farm or ranch property. While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these programs, the FSA has provided priority funding for socially disadvantaged applicants.

A socially disadvantaged applicant is a member of a group that has been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice. FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

Beginning and Limited Resource Farmers

FSA assists beginning farmers and/or 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 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.

Additional program information, loan applications and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. Visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

INTEREST RATES MARCH 2013		DATES TO REMEMBER	
Farm Operating - Direct	1.250%	OFFICE CLOSED EVERY FRIDAY	
Farm Ownership - Direct	3.250%	Acreage Reporting Deadline – Spring Barley, Spring Forage seeding, onions, spring wheat	June 15th
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.500%	Acreage Reporting Deadline – Spring Alfalfa for seed, Spring Oats and all other crops	July 15th
Farm Ownership - Direct, Joint Financing	5.000%	Fall Barley, Perennial Forage, Fall Forage Seeding, Fall Wheat, and all other Fall-Seeded Small Grains	Dec 15th
Farm Storage Facility—7 yrs	1.375%		
Farm Storage Facility — 10 yrs	2.000%		
Conservation Loan	3.250%		
Commodity Loans – 1966 to present	1.125%		
90 – Day Treasury Bill	0.125%		
		COC meets 3rd Wed of month on an “as needed basis”	

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).