

January 2014

# USDA e-News

## California Edition



**United States Department of Agriculture**

*Welcome to USDA e-News, California Edition, a multi-agency newsletter providing California's producers and other interested parties with current information.*

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## **Featured Item**

### **Emergency Conservation Program Authorized for Rim Fire Damage**

The Stanislaus-Tuolumne Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committee recently requested and was granted authorization to administer the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) as a result of the significant damage caused by the Rim Fire in Tuolumne County. ECP provides emergency funding and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate farmland and rangeland damaged by natural (and other causes addressed via waiver) disasters. ECP participants may receive cost-share assistance of up to 75% of the cost to implement approved emergency conservation practices. Emergency conservation practices included in this authorization are:

- EC1- Removing Debris from Farmland
- EC3- Restoring Permanent Fences (reduction in cost share percentage applied for age)
- EC4- Restoring Conservation Structures and Other Installations (such as permanently installed irrigation systems, etc)

Individual requests for cost-share assistance of \$50,000 or less per person or legal entity, per disaster are approved at the County Committee level. Cost-share assistance requests exceeding \$50,000 require approval from the State Committee or National Office level. Cost-share assistance is limited to \$200,000 per person or legal entity, per disaster. Funding for ECP is appropriated by Congress. Please contact the Stanislaus-Tuolumne County FSA Office at (209) 491-9320 ext 2 if the Rim Fire (that began August 17, 2013 and was contained October 24, 2013) caused significant damage to your farm/ranch or if you have any questions regarding ECP. **Applications for ECP are being accepted through February 7, 2014.**

## Updates

### Farm Service Agency County Committee Election Rescheduled

Due to a problem with the initial election ballot, FSA provided a new election ballot to all eligible voters in the 2013 voting areas in mid-December. The final date to cast a ballot (postmarked) in the FSA County Committee election is **January 17, 2014**.

### USDA Debuts One-Stop Shop for Organics

USDA recently added a new web-based resource center for organics available at <http://www.usda.gov/organic-agriculture.html>. The “one-stop shop” contains helpful information on all of USDA’s programs, services and data that supports organic agriculture. Visitors can learn about improved organic crop and livestock insurance, view local and national organic commodity price reports and other economic data, identify additional export markets for their products, and much more.

### Almond Grower Referendum

Every five years, eligible almond growers in California are provided an opportunity to vote on whether to continue their federal marketing order program, administered by the Almond Board of California with oversight by the USDA. The next almond grower referendum will be conducted in **February 2014**. To vote in this referendum, growers must have produced California almonds during the period of August 1, 2012 through July 31, 2013. Growers will receive their ballots directly from USDA/AMS Fresno, CA office during the month of February 2014. To allow the program to remain in effect, at least two-thirds of the growers voting in the referendum, or growers representing at least two-thirds of the volume of almonds represented in the referendum would have to vote in favor of the order.

### Natural Resources Conservation Service Released New YouTube Videos

In four minutes or less viewers can meet a California farmer or rancher who is working with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to solve a conservation dilemma, meet the conservationist who assists, and watch the process they use to craft a solution. NRCS in California recently released four new short videos on YouTube, available here: <http://www.youtube.com/user/NRCSCalifornia>. The videos follow a brief conservation planning journey for the following situations:

- Nutrient Management for Farmland Irrigation Systems
- Water Management for Greenhouses
- Hillside Orchard Drainage
- Conservation Planning for Access Roads on Forest Land

### Grape Crush Preliminary Report Scheduled for February 10

#### *Workbooks due January 10*

The 2013 Grape Crush survey of grapes crushed and/or purchased is nearing the end of the data collection stage. Completed workbooks must be submitted by January 10, 2014. The electronic workbook can be found at <http://www.nass.usda.gov/ca>. A Preliminary Report will be published **February 10, 2014** and a Final Report will be available March 10, 2014. Information contained in the Report is supplied by processors to fulfill the reporting requirements of Section

55601.5 of the California Food and Agricultural Code. The Grape Crush Report includes all grape tonnage crushed during the 2013 season. Assessment fees, designated for the work of the Pierce's Disease/Glassy Wing Sharp Shooter Program, are collected in conjunction with the annual Grape Crush survey. To find out more, email [nass-gcrush@nass.usda.gov](mailto:nass-gcrush@nass.usda.gov) or contact Lena Schwedler or Jenifer Van Court at the California National Agricultural Statistics Service office at 1-800-851-1127.

### **NASS Continues to Visit Farms for CEAP Survey Through February**

Under a cooperative agreement with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is conducting the 2013 National Resources Inventory Conservation Effects Assessment Project (NRI-CEAP) survey of farming and conservation practices. The 2013 NRI-CEAP takes place in the California Bay Delta watershed area with a primary focus on the Sacramento River Watershed, the San Joaquin River Watershed, and the Tulare Lake Basin Watershed. NASS representatives are visiting approximately 1,732 farms in California and 32 farms in Oregon **through February 2014** to collect information about on-farm conservation practices. To find out more, visit the CEAP website ([http://www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Conservation\\_Effects\\_Assessment\\_Project](http://www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Conservation_Effects_Assessment_Project)) or contact your nearest NASS office at 1-800-851-1127.

### **Census of Agriculture Results Coming Soon**

Be on the lookout – NASS will release preliminary 2012 Census of Agriculture results on **February 20**. The results will be presented at the USDA Agricultural Outlook Forum and be available online at <http://www.agcensus.usda.gov>. The Census of Agriculture provides the most consistent and comprehensive information about conditions and trends in U.S. agriculture. NASS finished collecting Census data late last summer. The full 2012 Census publication is certain to show interesting trends over the past five years and will contain several pieces of data that were collected for the first-time ever. Among the new information are statistics about biomass, Internet access, regional food marketing and distribution, land use practices, and agroforestry. The data are critically important in telling the story of American agriculture for the 98% of Americans who don't live on the farm and the more than 80% who do not live in rural areas. NASS will announce a release date for the full report as soon as it is set. NASS delayed publication of the full 2012 Census of Agriculture as a result of the work stoppage caused by the lapse in federal funding in October 2013.

## **Funding Opportunities**

### **Application Closing Date Nears for Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program**

2014 Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) application closing dates for several crops are fast approaching. Please make sure to file an application for coverage and pay the service fee for your crop policy before these dates have passed. **January 31, 2014** is the last day to buy coverage for apples and **March 1, 2014** is the last day to buy coverage for annual crops (tomatoes, peppers, carrots, etc.). For more information, please contact your local Farm Service Agency Office. A list is available at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ca>

## Sales Closing Date Nears for Crop Insurance Programs

Sales closing dates for several crop insurance programs are almost here. Please make sure to sign up, review, or change your crop policy before these dates have passed. **January 31, 2014** is the last day to buy or change your policy for AGR, Apples, Cherries, Fresh Market and Processing Tomatoes, Grapes and Table Grapes, Olives, Potatoes (spring planted in San Joaquin County), Stonefruit, and Walnuts. **February 1, 2014** is the last day to buy or change your policy for onions in Modoc and Siskiyou Counties. For more information contact your agent or you can find an agent on the RMA website at <http://www.rma.usda.gov/tools/agent.html>.

## Acreage Reporting Deadline for Farm Service Agency

The 2014 Acreage Reporting deadlines for several crops are fast approaching. Please make sure to file an Acreage Report prior to the deadline to avoid paying late file fees. For more information, please contact your local Farm Service Agency Office. A list is available at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ca>.

## Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in California has set **February 14, 2014**, as the deadline for accepting applications for the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program ([FRPP](#)). FRPP is a voluntary program that provides matching funds to State, Tribal, or local governments and nongovernmental organizations with existing farmland protection programs to purchase conservation easements. Land trusts and other eligible entities interested in permanently protecting farm or ranchlands in California are encouraged to get their applications in soon. FRPP proposals are to be submitted to the Davis, California, NRCS State Office.

## Applications Accepted for Value-Added Producer Grants

Rural Development is accepting applications for the Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program until **February 24, 2014**. Maximum awards are \$75,000 for planning grants and \$200,000 for working capital grants. Interested applicants should visit Rural Development's website [http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP\\_VAPG.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_VAPG.html) for additional information including application templates and a link to the notice in the Federal Register. Questions can also be directed to Karen Firestein at [karen.firestein@ca.usda.gov](mailto:karen.firestein@ca.usda.gov) or 530-792-5829.

## Reports and Publications

### NASS Reports

[Crop Production](#) (01/10/2014)

[Freestone Peach Freezer & Dehydrator Report](#) (01/14/2014)

[Processing Tomato Report](#) (01/15/2014)

[Fruit & Nut Review](#) (01/16/2014)

[Field Crop Review](#) (01/16/2014)

[Livestock Review](#) (01/31/2014)

[Poultry Report](#) (01/30/2014)

## **Other Activities & Events**

### **Forum on Cover Crops and Soil Health**

You are invited to attend a free, live broadcast of the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE)-sponsored *National Conference on Cover Crops and Soil Health* on **February 18**. Join the conversation at one of nearly 200 *Cover Crops and Soil Health Forums* to be hosted nationwide by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and Cooperative Extension offices. [Find a forum location near you](#). Please RSVP! There is no cost to participate, but please contact the site you plan to attend to register and confirm both the location and other program details. For more information please see: <http://www.sare.org/Events/Forum-on-Cover-Crops-and-Soil-Health>.

### **Stream Systems Technology Center**

The primary aim of the [Stream Systems Technology Center](#) is to exchange technical ideas and transfer technology among scientists working with wildland stream systems. [Stream Notes Newsletters](#) are no longer published quarterly but there are past newsletters with a wealth of information provided. For more information please see: <http://stream.fs.fed.us/news/>.

### **Agricultural Marketing Service Offers Webinars for Fruit and Vegetable Industry**

The Agricultural Marketing Service's (AMS) Fruit and Vegetable Program is offering a series of free, interactive webinars on their programs and services. These informative webinars are designed for fruit and vegetable growers, packers, shippers, processors, wholesalers and retailers of all sizes. Registration is required and space is limited. Past webinars are also archived and available to watch online. Upcoming webinars:

- **January 23, 2014** 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. (Eastern Time) "In Korean – An Introduction to the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA)." Register at: <http://bit.ly/17J7AjS>

## **About Us**

### **Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)**

- [Find a Program](#)

### **Farm Service Agency (FSA)**

- [When Disaster Strikes](#)
- [Managing Credit Needs](#)
- [Commodity Support](#)
- [Direct/Counter-Cyclical and Revenue Programs](#)
- [Energy](#)
- [Conservation](#)

### **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)**

- [Conservation](#)
- [Financial Assistance and Easement Programs](#)

## **National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)**

- [Census of Agriculture](#)
- [Agriculture Surveys](#)

## **Risk Management Agency (RMA)**

- [Crop Insurance Programs](#)
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- [Risk Management Education & Outreach](#)

## **Rural Development (RD)**

- [Overview of Programs](#)

## **Contact Us**

If you would like to receive a copy of future newsletters or if you have relevant information for California producers that you want to include in a future issue of this newsletter, please email one of the contacts listed below. Please be advised that not all activities may be published.

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