



Kern County FSA News

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County Committee Elections

It's county committee election time, and this special issue of the Kern County FSA newsletter is your guide to the 2006 election.

Since this only happens once a year, here is an election refresher. For election purposes, counties are divided into *local administrative areas*, or LAAs. Each LAA contributes one producer to serve a three-year term on the Farm Service Agency county committee.

Most counties are divided into three LAAs. Combined counties may have three to five LAAs.

Each year, an election is held in an LAA to replace the committee member whose three-year term is expiring. In counties with three LAAs, one seat is up for election. In combined counties in some years, two seats may be up for election.

The three steps in the election process are the call for nominations, the election and installing the new committee member.

Two LAAs are up for election in Kern County this year. They are LAA-1, which represents the Buttonwillow area, and LAA-4 which represents the Tehachapi, Temblor Mountain area.

Election Timetable

- June 15 Nomination period begins.
- August 1 Deadline to submit nomination forms.
- November 3 Ballots are mailed to eligible voters.
- December 4 Deadline to return completed ballots to FSA county office.
- January 1, 2007 New committee members and alternates are installed.

Nominations Open June 15

Nominations for candidates to run for the Farm Service Agency county committee election representing producers in a Local Administrative Area will be accepted from June 15 – August 1, 2006.

Producers who are residents in the LAA holding the election and who participate or cooperate in an FSA program *and are of legal voting age* may be nominated to *serve on* the county committee.

Individuals may nominate themselves or others as candidates. Also, organizations representing socially disadvantaged minorities and women farmers or ranchers may also nominate candidates.

To be valid, the nomination form must be signed by the person being nominated, indicating agreement to serve if elected, and returned to the FSA county office by

the close of business on August 1, or postmarked by midnight August 1.

Who Can Vote

Agricultural producers of legal voting age can vote if they participate or cooperate in any FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age but supervises and conducts the farming operations on an entire farm can also vote.

No one can be denied the right to vote because of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status.

If you are unsure of your eligibility, contact the staff at the county office.

Who Can Hold Office

To hold office as a county committee member, a person must meet the basic eligibility criteria.

- Participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA.
- Be eligible to vote in a county committee election.
- Reside in the LAA in which the person is a candidate.
 - **Not Have Been:**
 - Removed or disqualified from the office of county committee member, alternate, or employee.

- Removed for cause from any public office or have been convicted of fraud, larceny, embezzlement, or any other felony.
- Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services.

For more information about county committee elections, contact the county office staff.

Make a Difference

From June 15 through August 1, farmers and ranchers can nominate eligible peers as candidates for election to the Kern County Farm Service Agency county committee.

This is an important time for the community because county committee members make decisions that have significant effects on you and the area's agricultural sector as a whole.

For example, committee members make decisions on applications for federal farm program and disaster payments. Committee members play a vital role by helping local farmers and ranchers weather tough financial times and natural disasters.

Also committee members are responsible for hiring the county executive director – a key player in the delivery of farm programs.

County committee members make many other important decisions which affect local farmers and ranchers, such as whether haying and grazing should be allowed on Conservation Reserve Program land. Talk to a county committee member or the CED for details on the types of decisions county committee members make.

To hold office as a county committee member, a person must meet basic eligibility requirements. Contact the county office staff or visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/elections> for details about candidate eligibility. Nomination forms can be obtained at the county office or online at the address above.

Remember the nomination period runs June 15 through August 1. Voting takes place in the fall. Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters by November 3. December 4 is the last day to return voted ballots to the county office. Newly elected committee members and alternates take office January 1, 2007.

Make a Difference: Nominate and Vote!

Reconstitutions

As of October 1, 2005, the Kern County FSA Office has been taking reconstitution requests for 2006. Please call and make an appointment to help make your visit more efficient.

Final date to request a reconstitution for 2006 is August 1, 2006.

Direct Payment Change

Producers who enroll land in the Direct and Counter Cyclical Payment Program after February 8, will have the option to receive an advance direct payment of up to 40 percent of the direct payment for any covered commodity for the 2006 crop year.

The amount of the advance payment was reduced from 50 percent by the Agricultural Reconciliation Act of 2005, also known as Title I of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005.

As before, producers may elect to receive their direct payments in two installments per year. The first payment is available in December of the calendar year before the crop is harvested. The balance of the direct payment is available in October of the calendar year in which the crop is harvested.

For the 2007 crop year, producers will have the option to receive an advance payment of up to 22 percent of the total direct payment. The total value of the direct payment does not change. Producers will receive the balance of the direct payment in the second installment.

Producers who enrolled in the 2006 DCP program prior to February 8 and elected to receive a 50 percent advance direct payment will be unaffected by the Act.

The signup deadline was June 1, 2006. You may still do a late signup until September 30, 2006. However, there will be a \$100 late fee per farm.

Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

The NAP program was designed to reduce financial losses which occur when natural disaster causes a catastrophic loss of production or prevented planting of an eligible crop by providing coverage equivalent to catastrophic insurance.

NAP is limited to each commercial crop or agricultural commodity except livestock, for which catastrophic insurance is not available and is produced for food and fiber.

Eligible Disaster Conditions: The damaging weather, adverse natural occurrence or related condition must occur before or during harvest and directly cause, accelerate, or exacerbate destruction or deterioration of the eligible crop. This condition must be reported to the FSA Office within 15 days of when the weather related disaster occurred or the loss became apparent.

Producer Responsibility:

1) File an application and non-refundable fee by sales closing date of the crop (see chart).

2) Must report acreage and shares for crops, which application and fee was paid, by acreage reporting dates, or 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest or grazing of the crop, whichever is earlier.

3) Submit crop production history for previous years, not to exceed 10 years but not less than 4 to establish approved yield calculations.

4) For each crop for which an acreage report is filed, the producer must report all production for that acreage, not later than the immediate subsequent crop year acreage reporting date for the crop. Wheat, barley & oats, April 15, all other crops July 15.

NAP program regulations state that once an application fee has been paid for a crop it is the producers responsibility to provide previous production (see item 3). It is also mandatory for program eligibility to report acreage planted (see item 2), and also submit production for each crop reported under NAP (see item 4).

This process must be completed every year for every crop for which an application fee is paid. This is required whether a loss occurs or not and whether a Notice of Loss is filed or not. Neglecting to follow these regulations could constitute a zero being figured into your yield calculation for that year. Since the NAP program is based on the producer's production, this could be very detrimental to qualifying or not qualifying for a NAP payment in a given year. Since yields are computed on a four year average, this could affect the actual yield for four years. Therefore it is extremely important the process is followed every year.

NOTICE OF LOSS

Producers are responsible to file a "Notice of Loss" within **15** days of: a) occurrence of any natural disaster condition; b) final planting date if you are prevented from planting because of natural disaster; c) the date of damage to the crop or loss of production becomes apparent to you. If Notice of Loss is not filed timely, it could result in benefits being denied. **VERY IMPORTANT!!!**

2007 Application Closing Dates

All other annuals	3/1/2007
Apples	1/31/2007
Almonds, Apricots, Asparagus, Avocados, Caneberries, Cherries, Grapes, Kiwi, Mint, Nectarines, Olives, Peach, Pears, Persimmon, Pistachios, Plums, Pomegranate, Rye Grain, Strawberries, Walnuts	12/15/2006
Fall Planted Garlic	10/1/2006
Onions Honey	12/1/2006
Fall Planted Seed Crops	9/1/2006
Forage Crops/Permanent Pasture	9/1/2006
Value Loss and Controlled Environment Crops	9/1/2006
2008 Crop Year Citrus Crops: Oranges, Lemons, Limes, Grapefruit, Tangelos	1/1/2007

Reporting Crop Acreage

It goes by different names—crop report, acreage report, and crop certification—but regardless of what you call it, filing an accurate and timely acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of benefits for a variety of FSA programs. All cropland on the farm must be reported to receive benefits from the DCP program, marketing assistance loans and LDP's.

Conservation Reserve Program acreage must be reported to receive annual rental payments. And, crop acreage for which Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance

Program (NAP) may be enrolled must be reported.

Crop reports, form FSA-578, Report of Acreage, must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. Producers are required to file reports by April 30, 2006, for wheat, barley, and oats; and July 15, 2006, for all other crops.

A late filed Report of Acreage may be accepted if evidence of the crop is evident with a \$50 late fee per farm.

Signing for Entities

In today's world of entities – trusts, limited liability companies, cooperatives, partnerships, and corporations – signing Farm Service Agency and Commodity Credit Corporation forms isn't so simple.

First, you have to have a document on file at the county office stating you're authorized to sign for the entity. It could be a copy of the articles of partnership or articles of corporation or a valid power of attorney.

If you have questions about the proper way to sign forms and contracts for your entity, contact the county office staff. We can review the records and help determine the acceptable signature for your situation.

Requesting LDPs for 2006

To request 2006 crop loan deficiency payments, you must use the CCC-633 EZ, Loan Deficiency Payment Agreement and Request. Here's an explanation for each page of the form.

Page 1 – Producer's *intention to request* LDPs in the future.

- Must be signed before beneficial interest is lost.
- Terms and conditions for requesting LDPs.
- Covers all farms and all eligible crops in all counties.
- Submit one to the county office staff. Remind staff of other counties where you have farming interest.
- This is your intention to request an LDP in the future. It is not a request for payment.

Page 2 – Producer's *request* for LDP payment on feed grains, minor oilseeds, rice and pulses.

- Use after grain is harvested and in storage. You maintain beneficial interest. The LDP rate will be the rate in effect on the date page 2 is received in the office.

- Can use after beneficial interest is lost. LDP rate will be the rate in your administrative county office on the date beneficial interest was lost. Must provide production evidence.

- Use when you wish to receive LDP rate based upon date commodity was delivered to warehouse. You must maintain beneficial interest from harvest through delivery to the warehouse. Complete all required sections including item 23B.

Page 3 – Producer's *request for LDP payment on specific bales of cotton*. Bales lists must be presented with payment request.

- Use to lock in a rate when in module. This is irrevocable. LDP rate is based on Average World Price lock-in.
- Use for gin direct LDP. LDP rate is based on AWP on the date cotton ginned.
- Use to lock-in AWP on specific date, after ginning and is irrevocable. The LDP rate is date page 3 is received in county office.
- Use when previous other options not used and you have lost beneficial interest. LDP rate based on date you lost beneficial interest in the cotton.

Page 4 – Producer's *request for LDP payment on sheared wool, sheared mohair, or unshorn pelts*.

- Use when wool or mohair is sheared and in storage. You maintain beneficial interest. LDP rate is based on date page 4 is received in county office.
- Use if beneficial interest is lost at shearing. LDP rate will be the rate in your administrative county office on the date beneficial interest was lost. Must provide production evidence.
- For unshorn pelts, page 4 is submitted within 60 days of slaughter. LDP rate is based upon date of delivery to slaughter company or buyer. Additional sheared wool and mohair and unshorn pelts information may be obtained from the county office.

Page 5 – Used when additional signatures are needed.

45 California Counties Eligible for USDA Emergency Farm Loans

Pursuant to President's Bush's declaration of an emergency in the state of California on February 3, 2006, 29 counties have been named eligible for USDA emergency farms loans because of physical and production losses based on damages and losses caused by severe storms, flooding, mudslides, and landslides., which occurred on December 17, 2005, through and including January 3, 2006. They are as follows:

Alpine, Amador, Butte, Colusa, Contra Costa, Del Norte, El Dorado, Humboldt, Lake, Lassen, Marin, Mendocino, Napa, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Sierra, Siskiyou, Solano, Sonoma, Sutter, Trinity, Yolo, Yuba.

In addition, the following contiguous counties are eligible;

Alameda, Calaveras, Glenn, Kern, Kings, Modoc, Mono, Monterey, San Benito, San Francisco, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Shasta, Stanislaus, Tehama, Tuolumne.

To be eligible, they must;

- Have suffered at least a 30 percent loss of normal production directly related to the above-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.

All applicants must complete a certification of disaster losses, which reflects the exact date(s) and nature of the designated disaster and how it caused the loss or damage. Crop insurance field reports may be a source for documenting losses directly related to the cited cause.

The authorization for Farm Service Agency to accept Emergency loan applications under this authorization expires on October 3, 2006. Applications should be filed with your FSA Service Center at 5000 California Avenue Suite 100, Bakersfield, CA, 93309. (661) 336-0967.

Attention Dairies and Animal Feeding Operations

All dairy/combined animal facility producers and associates: Please accept this invitation to attend the Dairy Regulation Update meeting hosted by North West Kern Resource Conservation District.

Thursday, July 20, 2006
9:30 am to 1:00 pm
UC Farm & Home Advisor's Building
1031 South Mount Vernon Avenue

The purpose of this meeting is to provide dairy/CAF industry a better awareness of new and upcoming air and water quality regulations, current research findings, and government cost-sharing assistance programs.

Walk-ins welcome, however in order to receive lunch and printed material **you must RSVP by Friday July 14 at 4:00 pm.** Please respond by: Email james.booth@ca.nacdn.net or call (661) 336-0967 x 134 and ask for James Booth, if he is not there, please leave a message.

Free Lunch Provided by RSVP Only!!!

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FARM SERVICE AGENCY
Kern County FSA
5000 California Avenue #100
Bakersfield CA 93309-0711

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ENCLOSED

FSA WEBSITE:
www.fsa.usda.gov



Dates to Remember:

DCP Late Signup Report of Acreage	September 30, 2006
Reconstitutions	April 30, 2006
NAP Application Closing Dates	July 15, 2006
NAP-Notice of Loss	August 1, 2006
	See Chart Inside
	Within 15 days of Natural Disaster Or Loss Becomes Apparent