

November 2007

Newsletter 2

**U.S. Department of
Agriculture**

**Farm Service Agency
San Luis Obispo County**
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USDA: www.usda.gov

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www.usda.gov.farbill

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8:00 AM-4:30 PM

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Lonnie Twisselman
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Advisor:

Mario Castaneda

County Executive Director:

Jennifer L. Anderson

Office Staff:

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San Luis Obispo County

FSA NEWS

NEW DISASTER PROGRAMS

On May 25, 2007, President Bush signed into law the "U.S. Troop Readiness, Veteran's Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007 (2007 Act). The 2007 Act provides approximately \$3 billion in agricultural disaster aid for America's farmers and ranchers.

Specifically, the 2007 Act provides funds for a **Crop Disaster Program, Livestock Indemnity Program, Livestock Compensation Program, Emergency Conservation Program, and Dairy Disaster Assistance Program**. This Newsletter summarizes the disaster aid programs of the 2007 Act.

Crop Disaster Program Signup

The ***Crop Disaster Program (CDP)*** provides benefits to farmers who suffered quantity and quality losses to 2005, 2006, or 2007 crops. CDP signup for quantity losses began on October 15, 2007. USDA will announce and conduct CDP sign-up for quality losses as soon as possible.

Losses from natural disasters may qualify for financial assistance if the crop was planted before February 28, 2007, or, in the case of prevented plantings, for crops that would have been planted before February 28, 2007. Producers who incurred qualifying losses in 2005, 2006 or 2007 can and should apply for benefits for every year and will be paid the highest dollar amount. The calculation is complex; prices for insurable crops are not the same between all three years, eligibility may not be the same for all three years. Participants may apply for loss benefits on multiple commodities as long as the losses occurred in the same crop year.

Only producers who obtained crop insurance coverage or coverage under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program for the year of loss will be eligible for CDP benefits. Producers must have suffered quantity losses in excess of 35%. For most crops, the calculation will compare the production amount to the higher of the county yield or the producer's actual production history. The amount of loss in excess of 35% will be eligible for quantity payments at 42% of the payment rate.

In addition to quantity loss payments, payments for quality reductions due to eligible conditions in excess of 25% may be provided. To receive quality payments, producers must suffer an economic loss to quality-affected production of at least 25% of the expected value.

If you would like to apply for CDP or have any questions regarding eligibility, feel free to contact our office and ask for Stacy or Caitlyn at (805) 434-0398 ext. 2.

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Livestock Compensation Program

The **Livestock Compensation Program (LCP)** compensates livestock producers for feed losses on non-irrigated grazing land resulting from natural disasters occurring between Jan.1, 2005, and Feb. 28, 2007.

Producers in primary or contiguous counties declared secretarial disaster areas or counties declared presidential disaster areas between January 1, 2005, and February 28, 2007, are eligible. Producers incurring a loss in more than one of the 2005, 2006 or 2007 calendar years must choose only one year for which they want to receive benefits.

Signup for LCP began on September 10, 2007. An ending signup date has not been established.

The following are among the types of livestock operations that will be eligible for LCP: dairy cattle, beef cattle, buffalo, beefalo, equine, poultry, elk, reindeer, sheep, goats, swine or deer.

Producers will not be penalized if they reduced the average number of livestock they owned for grazing during the production year for which assistance is being provided. Producers may receive a maximum of \$80,000 in LCP benefits.

Kind of Livestock	Type	Weight Range	2007 Payment Per Head
Beef	Adult	Cows & Bulls	\$10.66
Beef	Non-adult	500 pounds or more	\$8.00
Dairy	Adult	Cows & Bulls	\$27.72
Dairy	Non-adult	500 pounds or more	\$8.00
Buffalo/Beefalo	Adult	Cows & Bulls	\$10.66
	Non-adult	500 pounds or more	\$8.00
Sheep	All		\$2.67
Goats	All		\$2.67
Deer	All		\$2.67
Equine	All		\$7.89
Swine		Less than 45 pounds	\$.32
		45 to 124 pounds	\$.74
		125 to 234 pounds	\$1.28
	Sow	235 pounds or more	\$4.37
	Boar	235 pounds or more	\$2.56

* Other rates are available for other types of livestock, please contact the office.

For more information on the LCP program, contact our office and ask for Caitlyn at (805) 434-0398 Ext.101.

Emergency Conservation Program



Avocado/citrus producers who suffered severe damage to their orchards due to the January 2007 freeze may be eligible for assistance under the **Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)**.

This ECP program, which is administered by the Farm Service Agency, provides cost-share assistance to producers who have completed or will complete abnormal heavy pruning, tree removal, and stumping in their orchard. This includes debris removal. The damage must be a result of the January freeze.

Producers qualifying for ECP assistance may receive cost-share levels up to 75 percent of the eligible cost not to exceed \$250 per acre. No producer is eligible for more than \$200,000 cost-sharing per natural disaster occurrence.

The sign-up period for this ECP program starts **November 1, 2007** and ends on **December 31, 2007**.

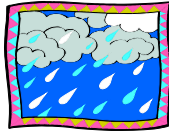
To be eligible for an ECP payment, all work must be completed by the end of the sign-up period. No extensions will be granted for this ECP program.

Also, to be eligible the damage must be so costly to rehabilitate that Federal assistance is or will be needed and affects the productive capacity of the farmland.

Producers who have suffered a loss to their orchard due to the January 2007 freeze should contact our office and ask for Stacy at (805) 434-0398 Ext. 105.

**NONINSURED CROP DISASTER ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM (NAP) DEADLINES
APPROACHING**

Deadlines for the 2008 Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage are fast approaching.



The NAP program provides financial assistance to producers on non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur due to a natural disaster. To be eligible for NAP assistance, crops must be non-insurable crops and agricultural commodities for which catastrophic risk protection level of crop insurance is not available.

At the time of application, producers must pay a nonrefundable service fee for the eligible NAP crop by the application closing date. The cost is \$100 per crop per producer with a \$300 cap per county, not to exceed \$900 per producer.

The 2008 application closing dates for San Luis Obispo County is summarized for the specific crops as shown below:

NAP Crops	2008 Application Closing Dates
Strawberries	Oct. 1, 2007
Honey, Onions	Dec. 1, 2007
Almonds, Apples, Apricots, Kiwis, Avocados, Cherries, Mint, Olives, Nectarines, Peaches, Pears, Grapes, Pistachios, Plums, Walnuts	Dec. 15, 2007
2009 Citrus Crops	Jan. 1, 2008
2009 Avocados	Jan. 1, 2008
Apples	Jan. 31, 2008
All other annual Crops	March 1, 2008

Once a NAP application (CCC-471 form) is approved by the County FSA Office, it provides continuous coverage and will remain in effect for each crop year unless the producer elects to cancel the coverage or fails to pay the application administrative fees before the application closing date.

Production Report Dates: Producers must provide the FSA Office with production records for all crops in which an acreage report is filed. This production must be reported no later than the immediately subsequent crop year acreage reporting date for the crop.

Notice of Loss: To be eligible for a NAP payment, producers must notify the FSA Office within 15 calendar days after a disaster has affected the NAP crop.

For more information regarding NAP coverage, you can contact our FSA Office and ask for Jody Gouff at (805) 434-0398 Ext. 114.

COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION

Just a reminder: Be watching your mailbox for your official county office committee election ballot starting early next month. Ballots will be mailed to all eligible voters in Local Administrative Area #1 (Land located south of Highway 41 and land west of Highway 101 including areas of Morro Bay, SLO, AG, Los Osos and Nipomo) by **November 2, 2007**. If you don't receive a ballot, feel free to notify the county FSA office.



Completed and signed ballots are due back in the county office by the close of business on **December 3, 2007**. Please take the time to vote.



**AGRICULTURE CENSUS INFORMATION
ONLINE**

The USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service has launched a web site to provide producers with news and information on the upcoming census. The site is located at <http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/>.

According to NASS, the Census site is part of their ongoing effort to accommodate the growing number of farmers and ranchers that are using the Internet. This year will mark the first time that producers have the option of filling out their Census forms online, saving both time and postage costs.

The Census of Agriculture is taken every five years, gathering information about every farm and ranch in the nation and the people who operate them. A variety of topics are covered and the Census provides comprehensive agricultural data for every county. Forms will be mailed to producers in late December that will include directions for responding online. Census forms are due by Feb. 4, 2008.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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Dates to Remember	
October 15, 2007	CDP sign-up period begins
November 1, 2007	ECP Sign-up period begins
November 2, 2007	County Committee ballots mailed to voters
November 12, 2007	Office Closed – Veterans Day
November 22, 2007	Office Closed – Thanksgiving Day
December 3, 2007	Last day to return County Committee election ballots
December 25, 2007	Office Closed – Christmas Day
December 31, 2007	ECP Sign-up period ends

SPECIAL ACCOMODATIONS

Special accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impaired, or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, please call our office at (661) 942-9549.

CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINT PROCESS

Any person, class or group of persons may file a discrimination complaint within 180 days of an alleged discriminatory action. Complaints may be filed in writing or orally with the agency head, any designated agency official or the Secretary of Agriculture, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. Assistance in filing a complaint can be obtained by calling or visiting any FSA office.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance programs. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD)

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202)-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.