

USDA e-News

California Edition

Welcome to USDA e-News, California Edition. A multi-agency newsletter providing California's producers and other interested parties with current information from the following USDA agencies:



Committed to the future of rural communities.

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Featured Items

California Small Farm Conference – *Cultivating the Next Generation*

The state's premier educational [conference](#) is back, March 4 – 6, 2012 in Valencia, California with topics relevant to family farming, direct marketing and agricultural sustainability issues. The three-day educational conference includes day-long field courses and on-farm tours; focused workshops; engaging keynote speakers and numerous networking opportunities. Everything you need to "Cultivate the Next Generation."

Conference Scholarships Available! Scholarships are available to support the participation of eligible farmers, ranchers, farm employees, college students and farmers' market managers who have limited financial means and who are from various socio-economic backgrounds. Download an application [online](#), or call 1-888-712-4188 to request an application by mail or fax. **All applications must be received or postmarked by December 16, 2011!** Scholarship Advisors are available statewide to assist in completing the applications. A list of Advisors, including those who speak other languages, may also be found on the website.

Secretary Vilsack Goes West

USDA Secretary Vilsack [had a busy Monday in California](#), making six stops to hold a business leader's roundtable, promote the American Jobs Act, encourage Americans to "Make Half Your Plate Fruits and Vegetables," meet with California agricultural commodity leaders and to drop in at the USDA state office in Davis for a visit with employees. He kicked off his day in California's Central Valley by conducting a White House Business Council breakfast meeting with state and local business leaders. There, the Secretary heard directly from business leaders about their ideas to grow the economy. [Read More.](#)

New Programs & Initiatives

USDA Informational Symposia for Tribes- October 12, in Oroville

USDA agencies in collaboration with the Inter-Tribal Council of California will be hosting an informational session on October 12, 2011, in Oroville, CA. The

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

[Conservation](#)

National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)

[Census of Agriculture](#)

[Agriculture Surveys](#)

Risk Management Agency (RMA)

[Crop Insurance Programs](#)

[Funding Opportunities](#)

[Risk Management Education & Outreach](#)

Rural Development Catalog of Programs Loans, Grants & Technical Assistance

purpose of the session is to provide an opportunity to dialog with tribal representatives, understand the needs of the community, and to share information about the programs and services available from USDA. Tribes and other interested parties within the Oroville area are encouraged to participate.

When: October 12, 2011: 9 to noon

Where: USDA Service Center, Oroville, Chuck Yeager Way; by the airport

Updates

NRCS Urges Farmers and Ranchers to Sign-Up for EQIP, WHIP by November 18

Although applications are accepted at any time throughout the year, November 18, 2011 has been set as the next cut-off date for reviewing and ranking Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) applications. Landowners and land managers interested in signing up either of these Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) cost-share programs should contact their local NRCS office right away.

These programs assist farmers, ranchers and other land managers with planning for and implementing a variety of vegetative, structural, and management practices that help conserve soil and water, improve wildlife habitat, reduce air pollutants, and much more. Basic cost-share rates are approximately 50% but may be up to 75% for beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and up to 90% for qualified low-income producers. Program descriptions and ranking and screening criteria will be publicly released on November 1, 2011. For more information visit <http://www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov/farmers.html>

2011 Conservation Innovation Grants Awarded for California

Seven private companies and conservation and agricultural organizations have been awarded Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) in California totaling \$497,625. These are in addition to NRCS' national awards to organizations in the state for over \$1.5 million. All selected projects contain at least a 50% match from non-federal sources, as required by the program. CIG grants help develop and adapt technical tools to address modern conservation solutions for water resources, grazing lands, energy, air quality and other natural resource concerns. [Read more and see selected projects.](#)

Sales Closing Date Nears for Federal Crop Insurance Programs

Sales closing date for several crop insurance programs is almost here. Please make sure to sign up, review, or change your crop policy before the date has passed.

October 31 is the last day to buy or change your policy for Alfalfa Seed, Barley, Forage Production, and Wheat. For more information contact your agent or you can find an agent on the [RMA website](#).

Filing a Crop Insurance Claim

Harvest time is upon us for many crops. Given the weather conditions this year, you may have a lighter crop. If you purchased crop insurance, this reduction in yield may be covered by your insurance policy. So, how do you file a claim? The first thing to do is to contact your crop insurance agent and follow up in writing, making sure to keep a copy for your records. It is your responsibility to call your agent to initiate this process.

When Do I Need to Call My Agent to File the Claim? The time to call is ANY TIME if you have crop damage that will adversely affect your yield or the value of your crop. Most crop policies require that you notify your agent within 72 hours of the discovery of crop damage. In some cases, you may not discover the loss until harvesting. If this happens, stop harvest and contact your agent right away. In the event of a loss on a crop, the last opportunity to file a notice of loss is within 15 days of harvest or the stated end of the insurance period in your policy. Make sure to read your policy to see if there are any other requirements that you need to be aware of for losses.

What to Expect? Once you have initiated the claim process with your agent, the insurance company that holds your policy will assign an adjuster to your field. The adjuster will contact you to schedule the field inspection. Your presence and help during the inspection will be welcomed and expected; the adjuster will be interested in what you have to say. The adjuster will determine whether your yield or revenue falls below the guaranteed amount stated in your crop insurance policy. In anticipation of the adjuster's needs, you should gather any records or other documentation you have about the acreage and locations of your insured crops.

Adjusters may take pictures of your fields, count plants in a sample area, or weigh samples in the field. They may also check with your neighbors on the condition of their crops and may visit processing or holding facilities (elevators, packing houses, etc.) to see what the average crop loads are coming into the respective facility. Weather data will also be evaluated and crop experts are contacted as needed.

While you wait for the adjuster, please remember the following: Do not destroy any of your crop. **Do not** disk, **Do not** plow, and **Do nothing** to destroy your crop until you have permission from a claims adjuster or insurance company representative. Your responsibility in the event of damage is to report promptly:

- Before replanting (many policies have replanting payments),
- Within 72 hours of the discovery of damage,
- 15 days before harvest begins (if a loss is possible),
- Within 15 days of harvesting a unit or the end of the insurance period.

Caution: Do not destroy documentation that is needed to support your claim without clear direction from the insurance company, preferably in writing.

For more information, contact your crop insurance agent. To find an agent, visit our online locator at: <http://www.rma.usda.gov/tools/agent.html>

Hispanic and Women's Claims Process

To obtain a claims package call 1-888-508-4429. You can also visit www.farmerclaims.gov to submit your information online. For more info see our [blog post](#) in English and Spanish.

Pigford – The Black Farmers Discrimination Litigation

Please visit: www.blackfarmercase.com or call 1-866-950-5547

Keepseagle - The Native American Farmers Class Action Settlement

Please visit: www.IndianFarmClass.com or call 1-888-233-5506

2008 Farm Bill

Learn more about the [2008 Farm Bill](#) which provides for the continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2012.

Funding Opportunities

New Farm Loan Option Available

California FarmLink now offers FSA guaranteed loans, as well as unsecured microloans, for infrastructure and operating expenses. The program is supported by numerous public and private investors.

For more information, contact our regional FarmLink Staff at:

North Coast: Molly Bloom, 707/528-2920, molly@cafarmlink.org

Central Coast: Reggie Knox or Eric Winders, 831/425-0303, or reggie@cafarmlink.org, or eric@cafarmlink.org.

Central Valley: Mary Junqueiro, 209/525-4720, mary@cafarmlink.org

Reports & Publications

[Vegetable Review \(Oct 7\)](#)

[Fruit and Nut Review \(Oct 18\)](#)

[Field Crop Review \(Oct 19\)](#)

[Livestock Review \(Oct 28\)](#)

[Walnut, Raisin and Prune Report \(Oct 7\)](#)

Other Activities & Events

International Farm Transition Network Conference

California FarmLink will host the annual International Farm Transition Network Conference (IFTN) in Modesto, CA from Oct. 15-18, 2011. This event brings together 30 leaders of organizations doing related work with farmers/ranchers and farm transitions. They will tour a four-generation livestock/dairy operation – Burroughs Family Farm, share information about their innovative projects, discuss policy, and receive training on inter-generational communications. For more info on IFTN, go to: <http://www.farmtransition.org>.

Tying in with the IFTN Conference will be a **Farm Succession Conference for the Central Valley** region. It is two days total, a month apart (October 15 and November 19, 2011). Farm and ranch families will begin to set goals and learn how to have effective family meetings. The second session will see families making progress on a plan for keeping their businesses healthy for the next generation. These are deep and challenging conversations, and well worth it.

For more information on both events, contact Nicole Alvernaz at Nicole@cafarmlink.org, or 209/525-4720, or go to our website: <http://www.cafarmlink.org>.

New FarmLink Blogs

FarmLink's outreach staff is now connecting locally through their blogs – with information specific to their territories; listing properties, workshops and conferences, mentoring opportunities, and more.

North Coast: <http://californiafarmlinknorthcoast.blogspot.com/>

Central Coast: <http://cafarmlinkcentralcoast.blogspot.com/>

Central Valley: <http://evcaliforniafarmlink.blogspot.com/>

Contact Us

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

FSA	NRCS	NASS	RMA	RD
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