



Maricopa County December 2008 Newsletter



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PROGRAM NOTES:

Dates to Remember

- Dec 1st – COC Election Ballots Due
- Dec 25th – Holiday (Office Closed)
- Jan 1st - Holiday (Office Closed)
- On going - Farm Loan Program Applications are accepted (Direct and Guaranteed Loans)

ATTENTION ALL PRODUCERS “New Farm Bill- (INFO): Due to the Federal Regulations not being published yet, we do not have the final rules and requirements for our new programs or the ability to sign up producers for any new programs. We will keep you informed of any changes.

ATTENTION ALL PRODUCERS “New System for Payments”- (INFO): During the week of **December 4th thru 9th, 2008** we will not be able to make any payments. Our computers will undergo installation of new payment software during this time. **We will no longer have the ability to print checks** at our office. Future payments will be sent from the Treasury Department; because of this, when making an account change/closure with your existing bank, **please notify our office.** It is crucial that we maintain the most current accounting records to avoid delays when dispersing payments to you or your operation. Your patience during this time is greatly appreciated.

Nominees for Upcoming Election- (INFO) The county office received a nomination form for Dawnie Sue Stewart for 2009. Dawnie resides in Gilbert, AZ, LAA 3. Dawnie Sue Stewart is willing to serve if elected.

2008 Election Timetable

- Dec. 8** Ballots will be counted in the county office
- Jan. 1, 2009** New committee member and alternates are installed.

Attn: Payments for Farms with 10 Base Acres or Less- (Action): Owners and operators of farms with 10 or fewer base acres now have the opportunity to receive payments for the 2008 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment Program (DCP). President Bush recently signed into law a bill that made amendments to the 2008 Farm Bill; These amendments apply to farms with crop acreage bases of 10 acres or less and to the new Supplemental Revenue Assistance (SURE) Program. These changes and clarifications allow some producers more flexibility in farming practices and create new sign-up opportunities with new deadlines for some farms.

As originally enacted under the 2008 Farm Bill, direct and countercyclical payments (DCP) could not be made with respect to farms with crop acreage bases of 10 acres or less. The new law makes that provision inapplicable for the 2008 crop year. Related to this, producers on a farm with 10 acres or less of base may now, under the new law, enroll their farms until Nov. 26, 2008, in the 2008 DCP program. This extension of the original Sept. 30 deadline only applies to producers who were previously excluded because of the minimum acreage requirement. USDA began issuing payments to producers on farms with 10 base acres or less who had already enrolled in the DCP program soon after the President signed the new law.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will now resume allowing reconstitutions for farms with 10 acres of base or less according to normal reconstitution rules and policy. Eligible producers may sign up for DCP at any FSA office or enroll on the FSA website at: www.fsa.usda.gov/dcp click on Access eDCP Services.

USDA to Conduct Request for Referendum on Pork Check off

Program The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) announced today that it will conduct a Request for Referendum next month among eligible producers and importers of hogs, pigs, pork, and pork products to determine if they want a referendum on the Pork Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Order, commonly known as the Pork Checkoff Program. Participation is voluntary, and only individuals who desire a referendum on the Pork Checkoff Program should participate. USDA will only conduct a referendum on the order if at least 15 percent of the total number of eligible pork producers and importers request a referendum. The total number of producers and importers eligible to participate in the Request for Referendum is approximately 69,446; therefore, at least 10,417 eligible producers and importers **must** request a referendum. If necessary, the referendum will be conducted within one year after the results of the Request for Referendum are announced. If results of the Request for Referendum indicate that a referendum is **not** supported, a referendum would **not** be conducted. The Request for Referendum will be held Dec. 8, 2008 through Jan. 2, 2009. Producers and importers who were engaged in pork production or in the importation of hogs, pigs, pork, or pork products between Jan. 1, 2007, and Dec. 31, 2007, and were at least 18 years of age on or before Dec. 31, 2007, are eligible to participate. For producers, the Request for Referendum will be conducted at the USDA County Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices where their administrative farm records are maintained. For producers **not** participating in FSA programs, the opportunity to participate will be provided at the County FSA office where the person owns or rents land. Eligible producers may obtain form LS-54-1: Pork Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Request for Referendum from those offices either in person, by mail or by facsimile. Forms may also be obtained at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/LSMarketingPrograms>.

Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) Changes-(INFO):

Under SURE in the 2008 Farm Bill, producers seeking disaster benefits must generally have obtained crop insurance or coverage under the Non-insured crop disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for all crops on all farms. Under the new law (P.L. 110-398), producers with crops that had 2009 crop insurance sales closing dates before Aug. 14, 2008, may pay a fee through Jan. 12, 2009, to participate in SURE. Producers may make their SURE participation fee payments to their

local FSA office at this time. The SURE program fee is equal to the fee for catastrophic coverage. Payment of the SURE program fee will not make the producer eligible for insurance coverage.

Producers also have a new minimum loss threshold under SURE. Under the new law, to qualify for payments, there must be a production loss of at least 10 percent for at least one crop of economic significance on the farm.

Under the SURE program, the new law provides that when a second crop is planted after the first crop was prevented from being planted, or if such first crop failed, the second planting will not count toward the SURE program guarantee or total farm revenue. This is true except in areas where double-cropping is a normal practice. Producers also are not required to purchase crop insurance or a NAP policy for the second crop.

By provision of the new statute, the purchase of insurance or a NAP policy for grazed acreage is no longer a requirement for the SURE program. However, such insurance is required as a condition for payment for the livestock feed program, tree assistance program and the emergency livestock, honeybees and farm-related fish programs.

In addition, the new law amends SURE eligibility so that crop insurance or NAP coverage is no longer required for crops that are not of economic significance or those where the administrative fee required to buy NAP coverage exceeds 10 percent of the value of the coverage.

Producers can contact their local FSA office for more information regarding SURE program implementation.

SURE Online Calculator-(INFO):

The 2008 Farm Bill includes a new disaster program known as the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program. For your convenience, FSA has placed a SURE calculator on its Web site at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/fbapp?area=home&subject=landing&topic=landing>.

The calculator and instructions can be easily downloaded. Once the download is made, you will be able to calculate your estimated SURE Guarantee, estimated Expected Revenue, estimated Farm Revenue and estimated SURE payment.

The calculator is a tool to help with calculations for SURE, it is not the approved software to compute and provide actual payment information.

By using the calculator, producers and others may begin familiarizing themselves with SURE calculations

which allows them to run various scenarios based on basic levels of insurance coverage versus buy up levels of insurance coverage. It is important to note that this calculator only addresses yield based crops and does not address value loss crops or those plans of insurance that are revenue based. It does not include calculations for situations such as prevented planting, first crop-second crop, or other scenarios.

Note: FSA reminds users that the calculator and instructions are for informational purposes only. This calculator in no way provides exact FSA payments under SURE.

2009 Farm Reconstitutions-(ACTION):

We are able to process 2009 recons. If you have any ground that you are losing or picking up for the 2009 year you will need to get with Mary Maxwell, please call her for an appointment.

Reminder: For reconstitution purposes, “**Permission to Combine**” must be included in new leases that are submitted to our office and **ALL leases must have legal descriptions.**

Prevented or Failed Acreage-(INFO):

Acreage reporting time is just around the corner. *Please remember that filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs. Failed acreage must be reported within 15 days of the disaster event and **before** disposition of the crop. Prevented planting must be reported no later than 15 days after the **final planting date**. Acreage reports are required if you want to be eligible for Farm Service Agency programs.

Failed Acreage Credit or Prevented Planting – (ACTION):

Producers requesting preventing planting credit shall:

- Report acreage on the FSA578
- Complete a CCC 576 Notice of Loss Part B

Provide evidence that:

- The land was prevented from being planted to the intended crop as a result of a natural disaster
- An effort was made to plant the crop

For questions call the office.

suffered quantity and quality losses to 2005, 2006, or 2007 crops from natural disasters if the crop was

CDP Program Sign-up Underway-

(Action): Sign-up for quantity losses under CDP began Oct. 15, 2007, and a deadline date has not been set. CDP provides benefits to farmers who planted before Feb. 28, 2007, or, in the case of prevented plantings, for crops that would have been planted before Feb. 28, 2007. Producers who incurred qualifying losses in 2005, 2006 or 2007 must choose only one year to apply for benefits. Producers may apply for benefits for losses to 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 (NAP) for the year of loss will be eligible for CDP benefits. Producers must have suffered quantity losses in excess of 35 percent to be eligible for CDP.

FSA offices may accept information from producers about quality losses when producers submit applications for quantity losses. and all other information necessary to determine eligibility is received by FSA. To receive CDP benefits for quantity losses, the FSA county committee must determine that, because of eligible damaging weather, the producer: was prevented from planting a crop; sustained a loss in excess of 35 percent of the expected production of a crop; or sustained a loss in excess of 35 percent of the value for value-loss crops.

Farm Record Changes-(ACTION):

If you have bought, sold or are renting different land, make sure you report the changes to the staff at this office as soon as possible so farm records can be updated. For farm ownership changes you will need to provide a recorded deed or recorded land contract. All landowners must furnish their tax ID numbers. Remember, failure to maintain accurate records with FSA on all land you have an interest in, can lead to possible program ineligibility and fines if you are participating in a farm program.

***Wishing you and yours the warmest of
Holiday Greetings***





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Attention: FSA Program Participant!!
This newsletter contains valuable information and important dates regarding our programs; therefore you may lose benefits



If You Do Not Read It!!

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Special accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, please call the office at (623) 535-5055.