



Service Center
U.S. Department
Of
Agriculture

Farm Service Agency

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Hours

Monday – Friday
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

County Committee

Joshua Sheppard – Chair
Gregory Stephens – Vice
Chair
Roy Roney - Member
Harmanjit S. Gosal –Advisor

County Director

Robert L. Maurer

Staff

Shän Bertapelle
Jennifer Pooler
Teresa Blackson
Erin Quigley
Brenda Richter

CA State Appraiser

David Widlund

Farm Loan Manager

Tom Roberts

**IMPORTANT DATES
TO REMEMBER**

COC Meetings

Second Thursday of each
month at 1:00 PM
(Subject to change)

2008 DCP Payments

No Program (Waiting for
Farm Bill)

Office Closed on Memorial
Day, May 26, 2008



Farm Service Agency
BUTTE COUNTY May 2008

2008 NEW FARM BILL?

We seem to be getting closer to a Farm Bill, but nothing yet. The current Farm Bill has been extended through May 16th. We will keep you informed through future newsletters.

**MOST 2005-07 DISASTER
PAYMENTS HAVE BEEN ISSUED**

You need to call if you feel you are eligible and have not received a payment. We have several in complete folders where the producer or other county office needs to complete documentation so we can make a payment.

2008 ECP FUNDING

ECP stands for Emergency conservation Program. Butte County is **NOT FUNDED**. We are in line with many counties across the country asking for funds. Hopefully we will get funded. It is the best we can do at this time. According to the National ECP Program Manager, “No funds are currently available for allocation... .Your request has been placed on a list for allocation, should funds become available in the future.”

**2008 COC Elections – Why
Not You?**

One of FSA’s responsibilities is to conduct County Committee elections in an open manner that ensures accountability. FSA will provide local organizations representing socially disadvantaged groups with detailed information about the COC election process. The agency is reaching out to agricultural communities to get equitable representation on their county committees.

Groups representing socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, will be actively

solicited for COC election candidates, and encouraged to fill out a nomination form (FSA-669A). Under represented farmers and ranchers are encouraged to step up and participate in their county’s COC election process. Producers will notice posters and announcements displayed in businesses, churches, and other public places. COC election fact sheets can be found online at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA> under the News & Events tab on the FSA homepage.



**IT’S THAT
TIME OF THE
YEAR FOR
ACREAGE
REPORTING**

Reports are required if you want be eligible for Farm Service Agency programs. Acreage reports are to be certified by **April 30th for fall seeded crops** and **July 15th for spring seeded crops including ORCHARDS**. You can still file a Late File report if the crop or evidence of the crop can be verified in the field, and if a late fee of (\$46.00 + Time + Mileage) is paid. **Please call for an appointment.**



**YOU ONLY HAVE 15
DAYS TO FILE A
NOTICE OF LOSS!**

If you are signed up in the NAP (Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program) you only have 15 day from the date of the disaster event or 15 days from the date the loss became apparent, to complete and sign a FSA-576 Notice of Loss form with FSA

Please call for an appointment.



LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS

If you suffered feed or livestock losses during the 2007 year, you may be eligible for a payment. Regulations were modified to extend eligibility through the whole 2007 year not just through February 28, 2007. **Call and set up an appointment.**



HELP US UPDATE OUR RECORDS

We are trying to update our records on an ongoing basis. If you get this newsletter and are not a member of an entity nor have any interest in a farm, or have a family member that has passed away, please contact us so we can get our records updated. Thank you.

Continuous CRP – Continuing

The Continuous Conservation Reserve Program is a private lands environmental improvement program that allows participants the opportunity to enroll environmentally sensitive acreages in conservation practices that will reduce soil erosion, improve water and soil quality and provide wildlife habitat and food sources.

The Continuous CRP program is a voluntary enrollment program. Eligible landowners enter into contracts that range from 10 to 15 years in length. In return, the landowners will receive annual rental and maintenance payments, incentive payments for certain activities, and cost share for establishment.

To be eligible for enrollment in the Continuous CRP, participants and acreage must meet certain requirements. Provided the eligibility requirements are met, FSA will automatically accept enrollments of acreage into Continuous CRP. Landowners may enroll in the program at any time during the year.

For more information on Continuous CRP enrollments, please contact your local FSA office.



Sodbuster Regs – Read Before Tilling

The term “sodbusting” is used to identify the plowing

up of erosion-prone grasslands for use as cropland. Sodbuster violations are unauthorized tillage practices on highly erodible lands that converted native vegetation such as rangeland or woodland, to crop production after Dec. 23, 1985.

Farmers and ranchers should be aware that if they use highly erodible land for crop production without proper conservation measures, they risk losing eligibility to

participate in Farm Service Agency programs.

Before producers clear, plow or otherwise prepare areas not presently under crop production for planting, they are required to file an AD-1026, indicating the area to be brought into production.

If Natural Resources Conservation Service indicates on a CPA-026 that the area will be highly erodible land, the producer will be required to develop and implement a conservation plan on the affected acreage, before bringing land into production.

In addition, producers and the producer’s affiliates have to file an AD-1026 with the staff in the administrative or control county office before any farm program payments can be made. The AD-1026 is the producer’s signed certification that HELC, as well as wetland conservation, provisions will not be violated.

Farm Recon – Explained

In program terminology, farms are *constituted* to group all tracts having the same owner and the same operator under one farm serial number. When changes in ownership or operation take place, a farm *reconstitution* is necessary. The reconstitution — or recon — is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation.

The following are the different methods used when doing a farm recon. Remember, to be effective for the current year, recons must be requested by Aug. 1 for farms enrolled in the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program.

Estate Method — the division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate;

Designation of Landowner Method — may be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons. In order to use this method the land sold must have been owned for at least three years, or a waiver granted, and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding;

DCP Cropland Method — the division of bases in the same proportion that the DCP cropland for each resulting tract relates to the DCP cropland on the parent tract;

Default Method — the division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system.

If DCP direct payments have already been issued on a particular farm, the reconstitution will be effective for the next year, unless the payments are refunded.



FSA Measurement Your Digital Service

Farmers who would like a guarantee on their crop plantings and land use acreages can make it official by using the FSA measurement service. Producers must file a request with the county office staff and pay the cost of a field visit to have stake and referencing done on the farm. Measurement service is available using digital imagery and where an on-site visit is not required are charged at a reduced rate. Incorrect acreage self-certification can result in reduced program payments, penalty, or loss of eligibility. Producers can request ortho-imagery and CLU covering their land (commonly referred to as a clip) at no charge. This would provide the acreage of an entire field.

GIS Improving Your Data

USDA's decade long program to digitally map the nation's farms and fields has established the Common Land Unit (CLU) as a standardized GIS (Geographic Information Systems) data layer. This standard has allowed mapping to be integrated easily on a nationwide basis. FSA manages this CLU data layer through a distributed database environment at more than 2,500 field service centers in the U.S. Transitioning to the GIS environment has made good business sense for FSA for a variety of reasons. First, CLU has improved Service Center to customer communication. For years, FSA had been using hard copy maps that were 10 years old or more. It was difficult to keep information accurate due to urban development and other land use changes. USDA Service Centers now maintain the Common Land Unit (CLU) boundaries and assist with a multitude of other farm programs. Second, GIS and GPS (Global Positioning System) provide more consistent and accurate land measurements, such as field acreage and acreage boundaries of conservation practices, such as riparian buffers. Using yearly updated high quality digital imagery, land use changes (farm transfers and land subdivisions) can be easily updated. Maps can be created in either paper or digital format for FSA customers or the public. Lastly, the GIS environment can accept data from outside sources for business decision making or environmental planning. Examples include demographic data, satellite imagery, GPS data, elevation data and soil types.

Are you a GIS user? FSA program participants can request a fully attributed CLU clip of your property. Make arrangements for this product delivery with your local County Office or Service Center. For more information about the Common Land Unit can be found by visiting online, APFO (Aerial Photography Field Office) at www.apfo.usda.gov.

FSA Farm Lending

Farmers and ranchers have an understanding lender who will listen when banks and other financial institutions decline to extend credit. That lender is FSA. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers loans for farmers and ranchers to purchase farmland and finance agricultural operations. FSA loan programs are designed to help producers who are temporarily unable to obtain private or commercial credit. In many cases, applicants are beginning farmers who have insufficient net worth to qualify for financing through a commercial lender. In other instances, borrowers might have suffered setbacks from natural disasters or might be persons with limited resources. Farm ownership loans or farm operating loans may be obtained as direct loans for a maximum of up to \$200,000. Guaranteed loans can reach a maximum indebtedness of \$949,000. Emergency loans are always direct loans for farmers who may have suffered physical or production losses in disaster areas designated by a Presidential or Secretarial disaster declaration. Rural Youth Loans, Loans to Beginning Farmers and loans for socially disadvantaged applicants are also available through FSA. For more information regarding loan eligibility or loan options, contact the county office staff for an appointment with a farm loan officer.

Youth Loans – a Good Start

The Farm Service Agency makes loans to rural youths to establish and operate income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5000. **Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:**

- Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien
- Be 10 years to 21 years of age
- Live in a rural area or in a town of 50,000 people or fewer
- Must obtain a written recommendation and consent from a parent or guardian if the applicant has not reached the age of majority under state law
- Comply with FSA's general eligibility requirements
- Be unable to get a loan from other sources
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the project and the loan, along with providing adequate supervision.

Stop by the county office for help preparing and processing the application forms. The FSA staff can help you with questions you may have about a particular program.

DEADLINES – DEADLINES – DEADLINES

Under NAP must file a notice of loss within 15 Days after Disaster Event

Mar. 1st – Spring Seeded NAP deadline for crops like pumpkins and safflower

Apr. 30th – Fall seeded crop report deadline

Jul. 15th – Spring seeded crop report deadline

Remember to let us know if your bank account changes. We don't know when or if we will have 2008 DCP advanced payments, it depends on what happens with the farm bill.

90- Day Treasury Bill	1.50%
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	3.125%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	5.00%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	4.00%
Emergency Loans	3.75%

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