



May 2009

Butte County FSA News

**U.S. Department
Of
Agriculture
Farm Service Agency**
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<http://www.fsa.usda.gov>

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
Shān Bertapelle
Teresa Blackson
Erin Quigley
Brenda Richter
CA State Appraiser
David Widlund
Farm Loan Intern
Aileen Garcia
Farm Loan Manager
Tom Roberts



Articles:
Crop Reporting
DCP & Acre
Personnel Changes
2009 COC Elections
Measurement Service
Farm Reconstitutions
Continuous CRP
NRCS Programs
ELAP
GIS

Crop Acreage Reporting **CALL FOR AN APPOINTMENT. WE** **WILL NOT BE ABLE TO DO WALK-INS.**

The annual, timely and accurate reporting of acres for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of benefits for a variety of Farm Service Agency programs. All cropland on the farm must be reported to receive benefits from the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program, ACRE, marketing assistance loans and Loan Deficiency Payments.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage must be reported to receive annual rental payments. And, crop acreage for Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and SURE must also be reported. Crop reports, form FSA-578, Report of Acreage, must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. Producers should call their FSA Office for the exact deadlines in their area.

Prevented Planting:

Prevented planting needs be reported no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date.

Failed Acreage:

Reports of failed acreage must be filed before disposition of the crop, and producers must be able to establish to the satisfaction of the county committee that the crop failed and was prevented from being replanted through the normal planting period because of natural disaster conditions

DCP & ACRE Signup Extended

Signup for the 2009 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment (DCP) Program has been extended until August 14, 2009. FSA will not accept any late-filed applications. Signup in the ACRE option is also available through August 14, 2009.

FSA computes DCP Program payments using base acres and payment yields established for each farm. Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. For 2009, you may request to receive advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment for each commodity associated with the farm. In some states, FSA is already issuing advance direct payments. Counter-cyclical payment rates vary depending on market prices and are issued only when the effective price for a commodity is

statutorily set below its target price.

The electronic DCP (or eDCP) service will save you time, reduce paperwork and speed up contract processing at FSA offices. It is available to anyone eligible to participate in the DCP Program. To access this on-line service, you must have an active USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account, which requires filling out an online registration form at <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov> followed by a visit to the local USDA Service Center for identity verification. The address used to sign up must match your Driver's Licence or you have to bring in something with that address such as a PG&E bill.

ACRE Signup is Ongoing

The Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program signup began April 27, 2009, and runs through August 14, 2009. The ACRE alternative provides eligible producers a state-level revenue guarantee, based on the 5-year state Olympic average yield and the 2-year national average price.

Commodities eligible for ACRE payments are wheat, corn, grain sorghum, barley, oats, upland cotton, long , medium and short grain rice, peanuts, soybeans, sunflower seed, canola, flaxseed, safflower, mustard seed, rapeseed, sesame seed, crambe, dry peas, lentils, small chickpeas and large chickpeas.

The ACRE program was created to give producers an option in lieu of traditional counter-cyclical payments. Producers may elect and enroll in ACRE for the 2009 crop year even if they have already accepted advance direct payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program. You have to choose either DCP or ACRE. FAV rules also apply to ACRE.

Personnel Changes

Since Jennifer has retired, you will be working with Brenda Richter and Erin Quigley as Brenda's back up on NAP and Disaster Programs.

Aileen Garcia's training is completed in Butte County and she will be working in the Willow's Office starting the end of the month.

2009 County Committee Elections

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency county committees is important to ALL farmers and ranchers, whether beginning or long-established, with large or small operations. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

County committee members are a critical component of the operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers and ranchers who serve on county committees help with the decisions necessary to administer the programs in their counties. County committees provide local input on:

- Commodity price support loans and payments
- Conservation programs
- Incentive, indemnity and disaster payments for some commodities
- Emergency programs
- Payment eligibility

FSA county committees operate within official regulations to carry out federal laws. County committee members apply their judgment and knowledge to make local decisions.

Election Period

June 15, 2009 – The nomination period begins. Request nomination forms (FSA 669A) from the local USDA Service Center or obtain online at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA> under News & Events/County Committee Elections.

Aug. 3, 2009 - Last day to file nomination forms

Nov. 6, 2009 - Ballots mailed to eligible voters

Dec. 7, 2009 - Last day to return voted ballots to the USDA Service Center

Jan. 1, 2010 - Newly elected county committee members take office

Who Can Hold Office

To hold office 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 em-

ployee

- 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.

Nominations

To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign the nomination form FSA-669A. The form includes a statement that the nominee agrees to serve if elected. This form is available at USDA Service Centers and online at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA> under News & Events/County Committee Elections.

Nomination forms must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business on Aug. 3, 2009.

Individuals may nominate themselves or others as a candidate. **Additionally, organizations representing minority and women farmers or ranchers may nominate candidates.** Nomination forms are filed for the county committee of the office that administers a producer's farm records.

Who Can Vote

Agricultural producers of legal voting age may be eligible to 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 of an entire farm may also be eligible to vote. More information about voting eligibility requirements can be found in the FSA fact sheet titled "FSA County Committee Election - Eligibility to Vote and Hold.

Measurement 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.

Farm Reconstitutions

At FSA, 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. If an owner or operator can not agree about program participation, like in the case of the new ACRE program, then producers should inquire about a reconstitution of the farm at the local FSA office.

The reconstitution—or recon—is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. Remember, to be effective for the current year, recons must be requested by August 1 for farms enrolled in specific programs.

Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

This sign up is on going. If you have areas along streams or large ponds, you may be eligible for a rental payment of \$50 to \$60 per acre plus receive up to 90% cost share for installing fence, water troughs or water pipelines. The purpose of the program is to protect sensitive areas along water improving riparian vegetation and wildlife. Please contact FSA or NRCS for more information.

Plum Producer Has a Plan: NRCS Will Help with Specialty Crops Too!

Mike Vereschagin says that his decision to convert from flood irrigation to microsprinkler irrigation is having a very positive impact on his 630-acre plum orchard.

“Microsprinklers have cut my water use to about a quarter of what it was before, and I’m definitely getting better growth on the trees,” Vereschagin said. Vereschagin is a fourth generation farmer who produces dried plums, almonds, and olives on more than 1,700 acres.

Irrigation water is a major expense for Vereschagin as it is for other farmers in the area. Agricultural water needs often exceed local water district supplies, especially in dry years, leading to increased prices. Rising energy costs for pumping groundwater is another significant financial concern. Vereschagin says that in recent years a lack of groundwater recharge has left his well pumps “sucking air” during the hot summer months.

This motivated Vereschagin to try increasing the irrigation efficiency of his plum orchard and to develop a conservation and water management plan. In 2003, Vereschagin began working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to develop the conservation plan for his orchards. He was inter-

ested in NRCS’s Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) after he learned that the program had become more supportive of orchards and speciality crops. For more information, Call the Butte County NRCS Office at 534-0112 Ext 115.

NRCS Expanded Drought Assistance Program Now Open to Farmers & Ranchers

USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist Ed Burton is expanding a previously announced drought assistance program to \$3 million. You will now have until May 22, 2009 to apply. Farmers and ranchers in designated counties with extreme or severe drought conditions, or continuous moderate drought over a multi-year period may apply for assistance from NRCS. During the special sign up, NRCS will take applications for practices designed to protect soil and air quality in areas of fallowed fields, keep orchard trees alive, and protect natural resources on ranch and pasture land. Due to the extraordinary conditions NRCS will pay a higher-than-normal 75 percent cost share rate.

ELAP (Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm Raised Fish Program

ELAP provides emergency relief to producers of livestock, honey bees, and farm-raised fish to aid in the reduction of losses because of disease, adverse weather, or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires, as determined by the Secretary, during the calendar year, that are not covered by the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE), Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), and Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP).

We don’t know when the sign up will begin, but producers are encouraged to compile their loss documentation so they are ready when the sign up is announced. For more information, call the FSA office.

There is still no word on when the SURE, TAP, LFP or LIP program sign up’s will occur.

USDA Farm Service
 Agency
 Butte County Office
 150 Chuck Yeager Way, #D
 Oroville, CA 95965-9215



| Dates to Remember | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Continuous | Continuous Conservation Reserve Program |
| April 30 | Wheat, Barley Oat Acreage Reporting Deadline (Call for an Appointment) Deadline is past but you can file a late report for a fee. |
| May 4 thru May 29, 2009 | Requests for Referendum for Soybean Promotion |
| May 25 | Office Closed-Memorial Day |
| June 15, 2009 | COC nominations period opens |
| July 3 | Office Closed – 4 th of July |
| July 15 | Deadline for reporting acreage for crops other than wheat, barley & oats (Call for an Appointment) |
| Aug. 3, 2009 | Last day to file COC election nomination forms |
| Aug. 14, 2009 | DCP & ACRE Signup Deadline, No Late Filing Permitted |

GIS

As part of a program to digitally map the nation’s farms and fields, the USDA has established the Common Land Unit (CLU) as a standardized GIS (Geographic Information Systems) data layer that has allowed mapping to be integrated easily on a nationwide basis. FSA manages this CLU data layer through a distributed database environment for all field service centers through out the country.

Transitioning to CLU certification has improved communication between Service Centers and FSA customers through the use of ortho-photography or NAIP (National Agricultural Imagery Program). Service Centers use NAIP imagery to maintain the Common Land Unit (CLU) boundaries and assist with a multitude of other farm programs.

Using GIS and GPS (Global Positioning System) provides for more consistent and more accurate land measurements, such as field acreage and acreage boundaries of conservation practices, such as riparian buffers. With high quality digital imagery, new 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. The GIS environment provides for the incorporation of data from outside sources for business decision making or environmental planning. Some examples outside data sources include demographic data, satellite imagery, GPS data, elevation data and soil types.

More information about the CLU and NAIP imagery can be found by visiting on-line, APFO (Aerial Photography Field Office) at www.apfo.usda.gov.

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