

Farm Service Agency

Imperial County

FSA NEWS

December 2009

Newsletter 4

Address:

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Web Sites:

FSA: www.fsa.usda.gov
USDA: www.usda.gov
Farm Bill:
www.usda.gov/farmbill

Hours:

Monday-Friday
8:00 AM-4:30 PM

County Committee:

Curt Corda
Gary Mamer

Craig Alameda

Advisor:

Raul Rodriguez Jr.

County Executive

Director:

Rosalinda Singh

Staff:

Carmen Perez, PT
Julia Contreras, PT

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2009 County Committee Elections

FSA County Committee members play a crucial role in helping the county office staff implement the Farm Bill Programs. Farmers and ranchers who are eligible to participate in these USDA farm programs elect a 3-person committee, which reviews county office operations and makes some of the decisions on how to apply the programs locally.



Ballots were mailed to producers beginning November 6, 2009. The completed ballots were due back at the local county office by December 7, 2009, either via mail or in person.

The Local Administrative Area (LAA) up for election this year is that part of the Imperial Valley south of Keystone Road. Voted ballots will be counted December 14, 2009 @ 9AM here in the office. This year's candidates are Alice Abatti, Sandra Benner and incumbent Curt Corda. Results will be announced in our next newsletter.

Biomass Crop Assistance Program

FSA is accepting applications for certification from biomass facilities interested in participating in the Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP). BCAP provides financial assistance for producers or collectors who own and deliver eligible biomass material to certified biomass conversion facilities for use as heat, power, bio-based products or bio-fuels.

Producers or collectors who deliver and sell these materials to qualified biomass conversion facilities can apply for matching payments under the collection, harvest, storage and transportation (CHST) component of BCAP. Matching payment cannot exceed \$45 per dry ton. Biomass material collectors are eligible to receive payments for two years. Eligible material owners or producers, who market eligible material to a qualified biomass conversion facility should contact their FSA county office regarding application. Note that some areas may announce sign-up periods.

An application must be submitted before the eligible material is sold and delivered to a qualified biomass conversion facility. Once an agreement is signed between FSA and a conversion facility, the facilities can begin accepting materials. After the product is delivered, a producer must provide FSA with documentation of product quantity, quality and payment rate. County offices will validate payment requests with information in the county office and information provided under the terms of MOU's with the qualified biomass conversion facilities.

DCP & ACRE Signup Deadline

Enrollment for the 2010 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) is under way and will continue through June 1, 2010. USDA producers can visit their USDA Service Center to complete their 2010 DCP contract.

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 2010, you may request to receive advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment for each commodity associated with the farm. 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 ACRE Program is an option for eligible DCP farms that allows participants to receive additional payments based on crop revenue reductions instead of only low national prices. Revenue considers both yields and prices, so the reductions can be attributed to low yields and/or low prices. Note that there must be both a revenue reduction for the farm and at least a 10% revenue reduction for the State.

Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP)

LDP's are payments made to producers who, although eligible to obtain a marketing assistance loan, agree to forego the loan in return for a payment on an eligible commodity.

By completing and agreeing to the terms and conditions provided on FSA form CCC-633EZ BEFORE losing Beneficial Interest (BI), producers indicate their intentions to receive LDP benefits. This one page covers all counties and all eligible harvested commodities for the entire year for the individual, joint operation or entity identified on the form. *Producers must sign & submit this form to FSA before BI in the commodity is lost.* Once CCC-633EZ Page 1 has been signed & submitted, the producer can submit an LDP request by completing commodity applicable page 2, 3 or 4 at any time during the loan availability period. Eligible commodities and final loan availability dates are as follows:

Commodity	Final Loan Availability Date	
	For 2009 Crops	For 2010 Crops
Wool, mohair, unshorn pelts	January 29, 2010	January 31, 2011
Wheat, honey, barley, canola, oats, crambe, flaxseed, rapeseed, sesame	March 31, 2010	March 31, 2011
Cotton, corn, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard	May 31, 2010	May 31, 2011

Supplemental Revenue Program

The 2008 Farm Bill amended the Trade Act of 1974 to create the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE).

SURE provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disaster that occurred in the crop years 2008 through September 30, 2011. To be eligible for SURE payments, a producer is required to obtain crop insurance on all crops in all counties or, if crop insurance is not available, to participate in the Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP) except for grazed acreage. However, crop insurance or NAP coverage is not required for crops that are not of economic significance.

Eligible farmers and ranchers who meet the definition of Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, or Beginning Farmer or Rancher are exempt from this risk management purchase requirement. The following are the conditions that trigger SURE payments:

- at least one crop of economic significance must suffer a 10% production loss due to an eligible disaster condition. A crop of economic significance is a crop that has contributed or would have contributed at least 5% or more of the total expected revenue from all crops on the farm
- producers in counties declared disaster counties by the Secretary of Agriculture, or in contiguous counties, or those who show proof of a loss of at least 50% for their farm are eligible to receive SURE payments for crop production or crop quality losses. Losses are measured based on whole-farm revenue, which includes crop insurance indemnities and commodity program payments, so that producers are not paid more than once for the same loss.

Foreign Buyer Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. FSA administers this program for USDA. Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form could result in civil penalties of up to 25% of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Coverage

The Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) was designed to reduce financial losses that occur when natural disasters cause a catastrophic loss of production or prevented planting of an eligible crop by providing coverage equivalent to Federal Catastrophic (CAT) Crop insurance. Statute limits NAP to each commercial crop or agricultural commodity, except livestock, for which CAT is not available.

In order to be eligible for new disaster assistance programs, like SURE, producers are required to timely purchase, at a minimum, CAT coverage for all insurable crops and/or NAP coverage for all non-insurable crops on their entire farm.

The closing dates for Imperial County are summarized for the specific crops as shown below (*if a particular crop is not identified in the chart below you must contact this office for that crop's application closing date*):

Imperial County NAP Crops	2010 application Closing Dates
Artichokes, winter vegetables, all melons (fall & spring), greens, lettuce, potatoes, sweet corn (fall & spring), tomatoes, watermelons, fall planted seed crops	Aug. 1, 2009
Value Loss and Controlled Environment Crops (nursery, flowers, aquaculture) market onions, forage (includes bermuda, sudan, klein, timothy, non-insurable alfalfa)	Sept. 1, 2009
Honey & mangos	Dec. 1, 2009
Almonds, Apricots, Kiwis, Cherries, Mint, Olives, Nectarines, Peaches, Pears, Grapes, Pistachios, Plums, Walnuts	Dec. 15, 2009
2011 Non-insurable tree crops	Jan. 1, 2010

NAP coverage for 2010 costs \$250 per crop, but not more than \$750 per producer per county, or not more than \$1,875 total per producer for all counties. The administration fee(s) must be paid by the above application closing dates. Limited resource producers are not subject to annual fees.

Producers who already have coverage on 2009 NAP crops may choose to continue coverage on the same crop or crops for 2010, if the applicable service fee is submitted by the application closing date. A new CCC-471 application for coverage is not required to be signed when applying for continuous coverage. Producers who choose to add a new crop(s) from previous year's coverage or changing crop shares must file a new CCC-471 with signatures and pay the applicable service fee.

NAP basic provisions are now available as FSA form CCC-471 NAP BP. These basic provisions may be accessed through the FSA website identified on page 1.

To be eligible for a NAP payment, producers must fulfill ALL annual requirements of the NAP program, including (but not limited to) notifying the FSA Office within 15 calendar days after a disaster has affected the NAP crop and providing FSA proof of production no later than the next year's application closing date for that crop.

2010 Acreage Reporting Requirements

Filing an accurate and timely acreage report for all crops/commodities and land uses can prevent loss of benefits for programs listed in the following table. The 2010 acreage reporting deadline for small grains is **March 15, 2010**. The 2010 deadline for hay, corn, fruits, vegetables and all other crops is **July 15, 2010**.

Benefit	Ac. Reporting Requirement	Reason for Requirement
Loans & LDP's	All cropland on the farm	Needed to determine reasonableness of claimed production.
NAP	Crop acreage or commodity for which NAP benefits may be requested. (Rpt Date for NAP is July 15 or 15 days before onset of harvest)	Needed to establish eligibility of the crop or commodity and producer for NAP benefits
Commodity Programs	All cropland on the farm	Required by program

ELAP-Livestock, Honeybees & Farm Raised Fish

Producers of livestock, honey bees and farm-raised fish can now apply for benefits under the Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP.) Losses can be due to disease, adverse weather and wildfires. To be eligible, producers must have purchased NAP. Eligible producers may receive assistance for losses that occurred or will occur on or after January 1, 2008 and before October 1, 2011.

For losses in 2008, a Notice of Loss, Application for Payment and other documentation must be filed no later than Dec. 10, 2009. For losses between Jan. 1, 2009 and Sept. 10, 2009, a Notice of Loss must be filed no later than Dec. 10, 2009 and Application for Payment filed no later than January 20, 2010. Contact your nearest FSA office for further deadlines upcoming soon.

***GOOD HEALTH, HAPPINESS AND A
PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR TO ALL
FROM THE FSA CREW!!***

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
 Farm Service Agency
 Imperial County FSA Office
 177 N. Imperial Avenue
 El Centro CA 92243

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Dates to Remember	
December 7, 2009	County Committee voted ballots must be received in this office
December 10, 2009	2008 & 2009 ELAP Deadline
December 25, 2009	Holiday-Office Closed
January 1, 2010	Holiday-Office Closed
January 1, 2010	Deadline to purchase 2011 NAP coverage on non-insurable tree crops
March 15, 2010	Deadline to report Small Grains
July 15, 2010	Deadline to report all other crops
15 days of natural disaster or loss becomes apparent	NAP Notice of Loss (must file notice of loss on FSA form FSA-576)

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS - 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.

APPEAL PROCESS - After an FSA official makes a decision on your request or application for USDA services, you will be sent a letter informing you of the decision and options you can pursue if you disagree. Generally, appellants have 3 choices – an informal review with the original agency decision-maker, an opportunity for mediation and finally an appeal to the next level of authority within the agency.

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.