



# Imperial County FSA NEWS

June 2010

## 2010 FSA County Committee Elections

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency (FSA) 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 (COC) members are a critical component of FSA operations. The intent is to have the COC reflect the makeup of the producers and to represent all constituents. This means wherever possible, minorities, women or lower income producers need to be on the committee to speak for these underrepresented groups.

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 designed to carry out federal laws. County committee members apply their judgment and knowledge to make local decisions

### Election Period

June 15, 2010 – The nomination period begins. Request nomination forms from the local USDA Service Center or online at: [http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA\\_File/sa0669a\\_commiteelectform.pdf](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/sa0669a_commiteelectform.pdf)

August 2, 2010 - Last day to file nomination forms (FSA-669A) at the local USDA Service Center.

November 5, 2010 - Ballots mailed to eligible voters.

December 6, 2010 - Last day to return voted ballots to the USDA Service Center.

January 1, 2011 - Newly elected county committee members take office.

### Local Administrative Areas (LAAs)

The area served by our FSA Committee is divided into three LAAs. One member on the committee represents each LAA and serves a 3-year term. This year, LAA #2 (Imperial County north of Keystone Road) is up for election.

### Who Can Hold Office

To hold office as a county committee member, a person must meet the basic eligibility criteria as follows:

- 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.

### Nominations

To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign 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/Internet/FSA\\_File/sa0669a\\_commiteelectform.pdf](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/sa0669a_commiteelectform.pdf)

Nomination forms for the 2010 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business on Aug. 2, 2010.

Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in an FSA program may be nominated for the county committee. 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 in the office that administers the producer's farm records.

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**USDA Service Center**  
177 N. Imperial Ave  
El Centro CA 92243

**Telephone:**  
(760) 352 3531 ext. 2  
Fax: (760) 352 0219

**Web Sites:**  
FSA: [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)  
USDA: [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)

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

**County Committee:**  
Gary Mamer  
Curt Corda  
Craig Alameda

**Advisor:**  
Raul Rodriguez Jr

**County Executive Director:**  
Rosalinda Singh  
[rosa.singh@ca.usda.gov](mailto:rosa.singh@ca.usda.gov)

**Staff:**  
Carmen Perez, PT  
[carmen.perez@ca.usda.gov](mailto:carmen.perez@ca.usda.gov)  
Julia Contreras, PT  
[julia.contreras@ca.usda.gov](mailto:julia.contreras@ca.usda.gov)

**Farm Loan Manager:**  
Thomas Hunton  
(661) 336-0967 ext 116



**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 Office as a County Committee Member." Producers may also contact this office for more information.

**Tree Assistance Program (TAP)**

Assistance for orchardists and nursery tree growers with weather-related losses can now be obtained through the Tree Assistance Program (TAP). Signup began Monday, May 10, 2010 for growers to apply for benefits under TAP at local FSA offices.

TAP, authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, provides help to orchard and nursery tree growers who produce trees, bushes and vines for commercial purposes, to replant or rehabilitate trees, bushes and vines damaged or destroyed by natural disasters. Christmas tree and nursery tree growers are now also eligible. Trees grown for pulp or timber or grown for commercial purposes are not eligible.

To be eligible for TAP, orchardists and nursery tree growers must:

- Have suffered more than a 15 percent death loss due to the natural disaster after adjustment for normal mortality
- Have owned the eligible trees, bushes, and vines when the natural disaster occurred
- Replace eligible trees, bushes, and vines within 12 months from the date the application is approved.

TAP is a cost-reimbursement program, with payments covering up to 70 percent of replant costs and 50 percent of pruning, removal and other salvaging costs for replacing or salvaging damaged trees.

Producers must also have purchased a policy or plan of insurance under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, or for 2008 crop year a waiver of the risk management purchase requirement could be obtained through a buy-in provision. Eligible losses must have occurred on or after January 1, 2008, and before October 1, 2011.

For more information on the new TAP program, please contact your county FSA office or the website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/tap>

**Non-Insured Assistance Program**

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.

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*):

<b>Imperial County NAP Crops</b>	<b>2011 application Closing Dates</b>
Artichokes, winter vegetables, all melons (fall & spring), greens, lettuce, potatoes, sweet corn (fall & spring), tomatoes, watermelons, fall planted seed crops	Aug. 1, 2010
Value Loss and Controlled Environment Crops (nursery, flowers, aquaculture) market onions, forage (includes bermuda, sudan, klein, timothy, non-insurable alfalfa)	Sept. 1, 2010
Honey & mangos	Dec. 1, 2010
Almonds, Apricots, Kiwis, Cherries, Mint, Olives, Nectarines, Peaches, Pears, Grapes, Pistachios, Plums, Walnuts	Dec. 15, 2010
2012 Non-insurable tree crops	Jan. 1, 2011

NAP coverage for 2011 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 2010 NAP crops may choose to continue coverage on the same crop or crops for 2011, 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.

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*Continued from pg 2: Non-insured Assistance Program –*

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.**

## Farm Loan Programs

FSA is committed to providing family farmers with loans to meet their farm credit needs. If you are having trouble getting the credit you need for your farm, direct and guaranteed loans are currently available. FSA's loan programs are designed to help family farmers obtain loans and loan guarantees, and conduct business planning.

In many cases, these are beginning farmers who need additional financial and business acumen to qualify for commercial credit. In other cases, they are farmers who have suffered financial setbacks from natural disasters, or who need additional resources with which to establish and maintain profitable farming operations.

### **PRESIDENTIAL DISASTER DECLARATIONS –**

Imperial County is currently designated a primary county for 2 disaster declarations. As a result, Emergency Loans are available to any eligible applicant with qualifying production losses or physical losses. Loan approval will be contingent upon the availability of funds.

**#M1884-** On March 8, 2010 President Barack Obama declared Imperial County as one of 6 primary counties suffering damages & losses caused by severe winter storms, flooding, and debris & mud flows. **Emergency loan applications for this declaration will be received through November 8, 2010.**

**#M1911-** On May 7, 2010 President Barack Obama declared a disaster designation in Imperial County based on damages and losses caused by the April 4, 2010 earthquake. **Emergency loan applications for this declaration will be received through January 7, 2011.**

FSA employees can help you complete the necessary application and other forms, and help you understand what information is required and where to find it. For help with forms or to find out more about FSA loans, contact Tom Hunton, Farm Loan Manager at (661) 336-0967 XT2.

## SURE Program

The Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disasters incurred 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 no longer required for crops that are not of economic significance or those where the administrative fee required to buy NAP coverage exceeds 10% of the value of the coverage.

Eligible farmers and ranchers who meet the definition of Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, or Beginning Farmer or Rancher are exempt from the risk management purchase requirement.

The following conditions trigger SURE payments:

- At least one crop of economic significance must suffer a 10% production loss due to an eligible disaster condition
- 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
- Crop is in a county declared a disaster county by the Secretary of Agriculture, or in contiguous counties, or producer shows proof of an individual loss of at least 50%.

SURE payments can apply to crop production or crop quality losses. Losses are measured with consideration to the 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.

## Acres Reporting Reminder

Acres reporting time is just around the corner. Please remember that filing an accurate acres report for all crops and land uses, including failed acres and prevented planting acres, can prevent the loss of USDA benefits for a variety of programs.

Failed acres 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.

Acres reports are required for most FSA programs. The acres reporting deadline for most crops (except small grains) is **July 15, 2010.**



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**IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER**

May 10, 2010	TAP Signups began
June 15, 2010	Nomination Period opened for County Committee Elections
July 5, 2010	OFFICE CLOSED – Independence Day Holiday
July 15, 2010	Deadline to report all 2010 crops (except small grains)
July 28, 2010	Tentative Date – Next County Committee Meeting
Aug 1, Sept 1, Dec 1, Dec 15, 2010 / Jan 1, 2011	Deadlines to purchase 2011/2012 NAP coverage (see chart on pg 2)
August 2, 2010	Nomination Period closes for County Committee Elections
November 8, 2010	Deadline to apply for Emergency Loans – Designation #M1884
January 7, 2011	Deadline to apply for Emergency Loans – Designation #M1911

**Reasonable Accommodations** - Reasonable accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impaired, or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, please call our office at (760) 352 3531 XT2.

**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.

**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.

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