



April 2011

Imperial County FSA Office

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www.fsa.usda.gov
www.usda.gov

Hours

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

County Committee

Raul Rodriguez Jr.
Craig Alameda
Curt Corda

County Executive Director -

Rosalinda Singh
rosa.singh@ca.usda.gov

County Staff

Carmen Perez, PT
carmen.perez@ca.usda.gov
Julia Contreras, PT
julia.contreras@ca.usda.gov

Farm Loan Manager –

Thomas Hunton
(661) 336-0967 XT 116

Selected Interest Rates For April 2011

90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%
Farm Operating-Direct	2.750%
Farm Ownership and Conservation Loan Direct	5.000%
Farm Ownership, Direct Down Pmt, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.500%
Emergency	3.750%
Farm Storage Fac.	2.750%
Commodity Loans 1996-present	1.250%

2011 DCP Signups Continue

Signups for the 2011 Direct & Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) are under way. DCP payments are computed using base acres and payment yields established for each farm. Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. 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.

Producers can visit their FSA office to complete their 2011 DCP contracts (CCC-509). The CCC-509 enrollment deadline is June 1, 2011, however a late-file enrollment period through August 1 is authorized. Contracts enrolled after June 1 and by August 1 must satisfy all other program requirements and will be considered timely filed. Contracts submitted after June 1 and by August 1 must be acted on by the county committee only.

The ACRE Option

The Average Crop Revenue Election Program (ACRE) 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.

The decision to enroll in the ACRE Program is irrevocable. The owner of the farm and all producers on the farm must agree to enroll in ACRE. Once enrolled, the farm shall be enrolled for that initial crop year and will remain in ACRE through the 2012 crop year.

Disaster Assistance Programs / Risk Management

FSA disaster assistance programs include:

- Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program
- Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP)
- Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)
- Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP)
- Tree Assistance Program (TAP)

To be eligible for SURE, TAP, and ELAP, producers must purchase catastrophic risk protection insurance for all insurable crops, and NAP coverage for non-insurable crops.

Farm-Raised Fish means all fish being produced for sale by an eligible producer. In the case of honey, the term "farm" means all bees and beehives in all counties that are intended to be harvested for a honey crop by the eligible producer.

Producers who meet the definition of Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource Producer, or Beginning Farmer or Rancher, do not have to meet this risk management purchase requirement.

County Committee Election Results

Congratulations Raul Rodriguez Jr. Raul was recently elected to his 1st 3 year term to the county committee. Raul represents Local Administrative Area (LAA) 2, that part of Imperial Valley north of Keystone Road. Stephen W. Benson was elected as 1st Alternate and Steve Reeves was elected 2nd Alternate.

FSA appreciates all of the voters for taking the time to complete the election ballot. The county committee system works only because of your participation.

Adjusted Gross Income

USDA and the Internal Revenue Service have established an electronic information exchange process for verifying compliance with the adjusted gross income (AGI) provisions for farm programs. Written consent is required from each producer or payment recipient for the tax review process. No actual tax data will be included in the report that IRS sends to FSA.

This ensures that payments are not issued to producers whose AGI exceeds certain limits. The limits set in the 2008 Farm Bill are \$500,000 nonfarm average AGI for commodity and disaster programs; \$750,000 farm average AGI for direct payments; and \$1 million nonfarm average AGI for conservation programs.

Participants in CCC programs subject to average AGI rules must submit form CCC-927 (Individual) and/or CCC-928 (Legal Entity) to the Internal Revenue Service by June 15 to avoid interruption of program benefits. These forms may be obtained from local FSA and NRCS offices or online at: <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/mainervlet>.

Direct and Guaranteed Loans

The Farm Service Agency 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, or regularly borrow from FSA, direct and guaranteed loans are currently available. Farm ownership loans or farm operating loans may be obtained as direct loans for a maximum of up to \$300,000. Guaranteed loans can reach a maximum indebtedness of \$1,119,000. Producers are encouraged to apply early so a loan can be processed in a timely manner.

Emergency Loan Availability – A presidential disaster designation was declared on January 26, 2011 due to damages and losses caused by severe winter storms, flooding, debris & mud flows which occurred 12/17/10-01/04/11. Affected Imperial county family farmers have until September, 26, 2011 to apply for Emergency Loans.

To find out more about all FSA loan programs, contact Tom Hunton @ 661 336 0967, extension 116.

2011 Acreage Reporting Requirements

Filing an accurate and timely acreage report for all crops/commodities and land uses, including failed and prevented planted acreage can prevent loss of benefits for a variety of USDA programs. 2011 Acreage reporting deadline for small grains was March 15, 2011 and is July 15, 2011 for all other crops. 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.

Beginning and Limited Resource Loans

FSA has a program to assist beginning farmers and or members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

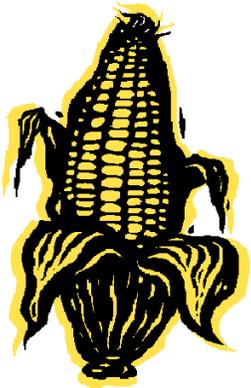
- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's median size.

Each member of an entity must meet the eligibility requirements. Loan approval is not guaranteed.

Additional program information is available at the local USDA Service Center or visit www.fsa.usda.gov and www.nrcs.usda.gov.

Farm Record Changes

June 1, 2011 is the deadline to provide changes to your farm records at the local FSA office for the 2011 crop year. If you are changing your operation entity type, adding or dropping cropland or farms, or adding entities to your operation, contact the FSA county office by June 1.



Hispanic and Women Farmers

A process to resolve the claims of Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who believe they were discriminated against when seeking USDA farm loans has been established.

If you believe that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) improperly denied farm loan benefits to you between 1981 and 2000 because you are Hispanic, or because you are female, you may be eligible for compensation.

To register for a claims package or for additional information on this and other settlement issues contact:

Hispanic and Women Farmer Claims Process:

www.farmerclaims.gov or call 1-888-508-4429

Pigford – The Black Farmers Discrimination Litigation:

www.blackfarmcase.com or call 1-866-950-5547

Keepseagle - The Native American Farmers Class Action Settlement:

www.IndianFarmClass.com or call 1-888-233-5506.

2011 County Committee Nominations and Election

The election of agricultural producers to 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.

The area served by our FSA Committee is divided into three LAA's (Local Administrative Area). One member on the committee represents each LAA and serves a 3-year term. This year, LAA #3 (Bard/Winterhaven/Palo Verde area) is up for election.

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 from this office and must be filed with this office no later than August 1, 2011.



SURE

The Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disaster. 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). Crop insurance or NAP coverage is not 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. **Deadline to apply for 2009 SURE is JULY 29, 2011.**

Changing Banks

Almost all Farm Service Agency payments are made electronically using Direct Deposit. To keep the system running smoothly, it's critical to keep the county office staff up to date on changes you might make in your financial institutions.

If you have changed accounts or institutions that might affect the direct deposit of your FSA payments, contact the FSA county office so we can update our files to insure continued uninterrupted service.

Conservation Loan Program

FSA makes and guarantees conservation loans on farms and ranches to help conserve our natural resources. The Conservation Loan (CL) Program provides farmers with the credit necessary to implement conservation measures on their land. The direct CL limit is \$300,000 and the guaranteed CL limit is \$1,119,000. Guaranteed loans are available through lenders working with FSA.

Applicants will work with Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS) staff to develop a conservation plan. Conservation practices must be approved by NRCS before FSA can provide financing. Examples of conservation practices include installation of conservation structures; installation of water conservation measures; transitioning to organic production; manure management, including manure digestion systems; and more. **Contact Tom Hunton @ 661 336 0967 XT 116 for more info.**

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 head, any designated agency official or the Secretary of Agriculture, USDA, Washington, DC 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 & 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.

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.

Reasonable Accommodations – Will be made, upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impaired or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, please call this office @ 760 352 3531.

Dates to Remember	
May 17	Tentative date for next county committee meeting
May 30	Office Closed-Memorial Day Holiday
June 1	DCP/ACRE Filing Deadline
July 4	Office Closed-Independence Day Holiday
July 15	Deadline to report all 2011 crops other than small grains
July 29	SURE Filing Deadline
Aug 1	Deadline to submit nomination form for 2011 County Committee election
Aug 1	Late-file DCP/ACRE Deadline
Sept 26	Emergency Loan Application Deadline