



NEWSLETTER



Oct. 2012

2011 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program Sign Ups

Signup for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments opened on Oct. 22, 2012. The SURE program is part of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Farm Bill). Under the 2008 Farm Bill, SURE authorizes assistance to farmers and ranchers who suffered crop losses caused by natural disasters occurring through Sept. 30, 2011.

To be eligible for SURE, a farm or ranch must have:

- At least a 10-percent production loss on a crop of economic significance;
- A policy or plan of insurance under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for all economically significant crops;
- Been physically located in a county that was declared a primary disaster county or contiguous county by the Secretary of Agriculture under a Secretarial Disaster Designation. Kern County was a contiguous disaster county for 2011. A “farm” for SURE purposes means the entirety of all crop acreage in all counties that a producer planted or intended to be planted for harvest for normal commercial sale or on-farm livestock feeding, including native and improved grassland intended for haying.

Producers considered socially disadvantaged, a beginning farmer or rancher, or a limited resource farmer may be eligible for SURE without a policy or plan of insurance or NAP coverage.

Farmers and ranchers interested in signing up must do so before the June 7, 2013 deadline.

County Committee Elections

Watch your mailbox for your official county office committee election ballot starting early next month. Ballots will be mailed to all eligible voters on Nov. 5, 2012. If for some reason you don't receive a ballot, feel free to notify the county FSA office.

Completed and signed ballots must be returned to the county office by close of business on Dec.3, 2012.

Nov 16th Sign-up Deadline for Ag Assistance

Attention farmers and ranchers: The USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) is offering financial and technical assistance to address a variety of resource concerns through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). NRCS's conservation programs help people reduce soil erosion, improve irrigation efficiency, improve water quality and wildlife habitat. EQIP is a voluntary program that provides technical expertise and financial support to address a wide range of ag related needs such as:

- ◆ Water quality & quantity
- ◆ Air quality
- ◆ Waste management
- ◆ Nutrient management
- ◆ Organic transition
- ◆ Range concerns
- ◆ Energy

Eligible producers with a conservation plan for their operation receive priority for financial

Kern County FSA Office

Garrett Pedretti
County Executive Director

5000 California Ave
Suite 100
Bakersfield, CA 93309
www.fsa.usda.gov/CA

Hours
Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

County Staff

Nathan Maragoni
District Director

Tom Hunton
Farm Loans

County Committee

Albert Ghilarducci
COC Chairperson

Louis Crettol
COC Vice Chairperson

Ben Ansolabehere
Regular Member

Jeff Bowen
Regular Member

Catherine Fanucchi
Minority Advisor

assistance. NRCS staff is available to help producers create conservation plans.

For information on program requirements, lists of eligible practices, payment rates, eligibility requirements and application procedures go to: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/>

Applications can be submitted throughout the year however those received by November 16th will be evaluated for funding priority for the pending 2013 fiscal period. Please contact the Bakersfield NRCS field office for information or to apply:

USDA-NRCS
5000 California Ave Suite 100
Bakersfield, CA 93309
(661) 336-0967 ext 3

USDA Announces Hispanic and Women Farmer and Rancher Claims Period Now

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has announced that Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA in past decades can file claims between September 24, 2012 and March 25, 2013.

The process offers a voluntary alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or female farmer and rancher who can prove that USDA denied their applications for loan or loan servicing assistance for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000.

The voluntary claims process will make available at least \$1.33 billion for cash awards and tax relief payments, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief, to eligible Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers. There are no filing fees to participate in the program.

Call center representatives can be reached at 1-888-508-4429. Claimants must register for a claims package (by calling the number or visiting the website) and the claims package will be mailed to claimants. All those interested in learning more or receiving information about the claims process and claims packages are encouraged to attend meetings in your communities about the claims process and contact the website or claims telephone number.

Website: www.farmerclaims.gov
Phone: 1-888-508-4429

2013 Reporting of Crops

All producers are reminded the acreage reporting dates for all crops has changed, beginning with the crop planted for 2013 harvest.

The new acreage reporting dates are;

December 15, 2012, for the following crops;

Perennial Forages including;

- Alfalfa for forage
- Native Grass for grazing

January 2, 2013 for the following;

- Honey

March 15, 2013, for the following crops;

- Alfalfa Seed
- Almonds
- Apples
- Barley
- Cherries
- Figs
- Apricots
- Peaches
- Nectarines
- Oats
- Pears
- Plums
- Prunes
- Walnuts
- Wheat

Please call for an appointment to certify your small grain crop.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

The noninsured crop disaster assistance program (NAP) is a federally funded program that helps producers reduce their risk when growing food and fiber crops, specialty crops and crops for livestock feed. These benefits are only available for crops for which the catastrophic level of crop insurance is not available. Application for coverage must be filed by the applicable crop's application closing date. Production records and applications for payment for all crops must be reported to FSA no later than the acreage reporting date for the crop for the following year. *NAP Losses must be reported within 15 days of loss.*

Contact your FSA County Office for A complete list of deadlines and more information.

2013 Application Closing Dates

Processed Onions & Honey 12/1/12
Forage Crops with intended use of forage (Mechanically Harvested) or grazing 12/1/12
Asparagus, Artichokes, & Herbs 12/15/12
Fruit & Nut Tree Crops 12/15/2012
Apples 1/31/12
All other annuals 3/1/13

2014 Application Closing Dates

Avocados & Citrus (Oranges, Lemons, Limes, Grapefruit, Tangelos, etc) 1/1/13

Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

The Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program allows producers of eligible commodities to obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities.

The new maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL is \$500,000. Participants are now required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with CCC providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent drying and handling equipment. New loan terms of 7, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan. Interest rates for each term rate may be different and are based on the rate which CCC borrows from the U.S. Treasury Department.

Applications for FSFL must be submitted to the FSA county office that maintains the farm's records. An FSFL must be approved before any site preparation or construction can begin.

The following commodities are eligible for farm storage facility loans:

- Corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley or minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain
- Corn, grain sorghum, wheat, oats or barley harvested as other-than-whole grain
- Pulse crops - lentils, small chickpeas and dry peas
- Hay
- Renewable biomass
- Fruits (including nuts) and vegetables - cold storage facilities.

For more information about FSFL visit the FSA county office or www.fsa.usda.gov.

Marketing Assistance Loans

A Marketing Assistance Loan (MAL) is available for producers who share in the risk of producing the crop. To be eligible, a producer must maintain continual beneficial interest in the crop from harvest through the earlier of the date the loan is repaid or CCC takes title to the commodity. Once beneficial interest in a commodity is lost, the commodity is ineligible for loan — even if the producer regains beneficial interest.

Commodity loan eligibility also requires compliance with conservation and wetland protection requirements; beneficial interest requirements, acreage reporting and ensuring that the commodity meets Commodity Credit Corporation minimum grade and quality standards. The quality of the commodity in farm storage must be maintained throughout the term of the loan.

Producers do not have to participate in any other USDA Programs to be eligible for commodity loans.

Rural Youth Loans

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 \$5,000.

Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

- Be a citizen of the United States or a legal resident alien
- Be 10 years to 20 years of age
- Comply with FSA's general eligibility requirements
- Reside in a rural area, city or town with a population of 50,000 or fewer people
- 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.

Contact the county office for help preparing and processing the application forms.

Loans for the Socially Disadvantaged

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. Loans are available for operating type loans and/or purchase or to improve farms or ranches.

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, FSA has provided priority funding for members of socially disadvantaged groups.

A socially disadvantaged applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities.

IRS 1099 Changes

Calendar year 2012 has brought changes to the way FSA reports farm program payments to the producer and to the IRS.

In past years, IRS Forms 1099-G would be issued to show all program payments received from the Farm Service Agency, regardless of the amount.

Starting with calendar year 2012, producers whose total reportable payments from FSA are less than \$600 will not receive IRS Form 1099-G. Also, producers who receive payments from more than one county will only receive one Form 1099-G if the total of all payments from all counties is \$600 or more.

The same changes will apply to producers and vendors who normally receive IRS Form 1099-MISC from FSA.