



April 2009

# FSA Program Updates

## The ACRE Program

The Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) is a new program authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill that begins in crop year 2009. Through ACRE, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers producers an alternative to Direct and Counter-cyclical (DCP) program payments.

ACRE payments are made when both state- and farm revenues are below historic levels. By participating in ACRE, producers elect to forgo counter-cyclical payments. Producers also elect to receive a 20-percent reduction in direct payments and a 30-percent reduction in loan rates. ACRE sign-up dates will be announced soon so a producer can choose to participate in ACRE, or stay with DCP.

A decision to elect ACRE binds the producer to the program from the program year elected by the producer through the 2012 crop year. Additional information will be available in a forthcoming newsletter.



## Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program Signup Period Extended

Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack has announced that USDA has extended the sign-up deadline from June 1 to Aug. 14, 2009, for both the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) and the forthcoming Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program. This action extends the sign-up deadline by 10 weeks to give producers ample time to decide whether to participate in ACRE or remain in DCP.

## Disaster Buy-In Waiver Extension

Producers who did not obtain crop insurance or Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for 2008 can pay a buy-in fee through May 18, 2009, to become eligible for 2008 disaster assistance programs authorized by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008.

If you have not already taken the necessary steps to become eligible for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE), Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP), and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP), you are required to complete the following steps by May 18, 2009:

- Pay a \$100 "buy-in" fee per crop. The maximum fee is \$300 per county, per producer, not to exceed \$900 for multi-county producers.
- In the case of each insurable crop, excluding grazing land, agree to obtain a policy or plan of insurance for the next insurance year for which crop insurance is available; coverage level should equal 70 percent or more of the yield at 100 percent of the price.
- In the case of each noninsurable crop, agree to file the required paperwork and pay the applicable administrative NAP coverage fee by the applicable state application closing date for the next available year.

Producers who meet the definition of "Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource," or "Beginning Farmer or Rancher," are not required to pay the buy-in fee.

**Kings County**  
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(559) 585-8732  
(559) 584-8715  
[www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)

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

**County Committee**  
Peter Rietkerk  
Ceil Howe III  
Vicki Dias  
Michael Miya-Advisor

**County Director**  
Kathy Sargent

**Staff**  
Joan Avila  
Winifred Brogan  
Nathan Olson  
Lillian Sanchez  
Julie Thomas  
Lance Carter

For a list of local offices,  
visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/ca](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ca)

County Newsletter #2



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## Acreage Reporting

Acreage reporting time will soon be here. Filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs.

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.

Acreage reports are required for many Farm Service Agency programs. For crops other than NAP (Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program) crops, acreage reports for fall seeded crops are to be certified by April 30, 2009 and the deadline for spring seeded crops is July 15, 2009.

Acreage reports on crops for which NAP assistance may be paid are due in the county office by the earlier of April 30, 2009 for small grains and July 15, 2009 for all other crops, or 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest or grazing of the specific crop acreage being reported.

## NAP Production Reporting

Production records for individual crops need to be filed with our office to establish an approved NAP yield. If this is the first year you participated in NAP, you can provide production and acreage information from prior years to establish your yield. If you participated in NAP in previous years, you must report your production and acreage on a yearly basis to keep your yield up-to-date. Records submitted must be reliable or verifiable. Records need to show crop disposition. We recommend producers submit 2009 production records as soon as harvest is complete. **All production records must be submitted by the subsequent crop year's final acreage reporting date.**

## Timely Filing of Loss

The CCC-576, Notice of Loss, is used to report failed acreage and prevented planting and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. Timely filing a Notice of Loss is required for **ALL CROPS INCLUDING GRASSES**. For losses on crops covered by the Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and crop insurance, you must file a CCC-576 (notice of loss) in the FSA County Office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent.

If filing for prevented planting, an acreage report and CCC-576 must be filed within 15 calendar days of the final planting date for the crop.

## Beginning and Limited Resource Farmers & Ranchers

FSA has a loan 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 average size.

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

Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. Producers in Kings County are served by the farm loan team headquartered in Tulare County. The phone number is (559) 734-8732. The address of the office is 3530 W Orchard Ct, Visalia, CA 93277. You may also visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

## Direct and Guaranteed Loans

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, or regularly borrow from FSA, direct and guaranteed loans are available now.

Ask your lender about an FSA loan guarantee if you've had a setback and your lender is reluctant to extend or renew your loan. Loan funds can be made available.

Producers are encouraged to apply early so that a loan can be processed and funded in a timely manner.

Most of our loan programs have special funding available for minority, female and beginning farmers.

FSA employees will help you complete the necessary application and other forms, and help you understand what information is required, where to find it or who to contact to get it. To find out more about FSA loan programs, contact the county office staff. Producers in Kings County are served by the farm loan team headquartered in Tulare County. The phone number is (559) 734-8732. The address of the office is 3530 W Orchard Ct, Visalia, CA 93277. You may also visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## Rural Youth Loans

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) makes operating loans to individual rural youths age 10 through 20 to establish and operate income producing projects. These projects must be of modest size and be initiated, developed, carried out by rural youths participating in 4-H Clubs, FFA, or a similar organization or with a vocational teacher or county extension agent. The project must be an organized and supervised program of work. It must be planned and operated with the assistance of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan, and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. Contact your local FSA office for more details. Producers in Kings County are served by the farm loan team headquartered in Tulare County. The phone number is (559) 734-8732. The address of the office is 3530 W Orchard Ct, Visalia, CA 93277. You may also visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)

## NASS Statistical Survey

*Have you been asked to participate in a survey with USDA's Agriculture Statistics Service?*

The Quarterly Agricultural Surveys, conducted by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) provide inventory and production estimates for crops and livestock at state and national levels. Each quarter a list sample of farm operators are contacted by mail, telephone or personal interview for inventory information on the land they operate. Sample segments also screened for farm operators.

*Why is it important for producers to participate in these surveys? Because...*

Statistical information on acreage, production, stocks, prices, and income is essential for the smooth operation of Federal farm programs. It is also indispensable for planning and administering related Federal and State programs in such areas as consumer protection, conservation and environmental quality, trade, education, and recreation.

Regularly updating the information helps ensure an orderly flow of goods and services among agriculture's producing, processing, and marketing sectors. Reliable, timely, and detailed crop and livestock statistics help maintain a stable economic climate and minimize the uncertainties and risks associated with the production, marketing, and distribution of commodities.

## Farm Reconstitutions

In program terminology, 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. The reconstitution — or recon — is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. The following are the different methods used

**Estate Method** — the division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate;

**Designation of Landowner Method** — may be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons. There are additional requirements

**DCP Cropland Method** — the division of bases in the same proportion that the DCP cropland for each resulting tract relates to the DCP cropland on the parent tract;

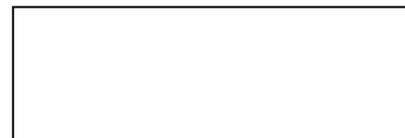
**Default Method** — the division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system.

If payments have already been issued on a particular farm, the reconstitution will be effective for the next year, unless the payments are refunded. Request for recons should be filed by June 1. See your local FSA office for details.

## NRCS Offers Drought Assistance

The Hanford Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office has announced that they will take applications from Kings County producers through May 8, 2009 for practices designed to protect soil and air quality in areas of fallowed fields, keep orchards alive and protect natural resources on ranch and pasture land. Practices being offered include establishing vegetative cover, soil surface roughening, incorporation of soil-stabilizing organic matter, silt fencing adjacent to highways, irrigation water management, pruning to keep trees alive, livestock watering facilities, maintaining standing stubble and more. More information on the drought, conservation practices that may mitigate drought related problems, and payment rates for the current drought initiative are available at

[www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov/features/cadrought.html](http://www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov/features/cadrought.html) or by contacting the Hanford NRCS office at (559) 585-8732 Extension 3.



<b>Dates to Remember</b>	
<b>April 30</b>	<b>Deadline to report fall seeded crops</b>
<b>May 8</b>	<b>Deadline to apply for NRCS drought cost sharing</b>
<b>May 18</b>	<b>Last day to purchase “buy-in” for 2008 crop losses</b>
<b>May 25</b>	<b>Office Closed-Memorial Day</b>
<b>June 1</b>	<b>Last day to request reconstitution</b>
<b>July 3</b>	<b>Office Closed-Independence Day (observed)</b>
<b>July 15</b>	<b>Deadline to report spring seeded crops</b>
<b>August 14</b>	<b>DCP/ACRE Signup Deadline</b>

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