



# NEWSLETTER



**Kings County  
Farm Service Agency  
680 Campus Dr Ste C  
Hanford, CA 93230  
Phone (559) 585-8732  
FAX (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**

Vicki Dias  
Peter Rietkerk  
Ceil Howe III  
Michael Miya-Advisor

#### **County Director**

Kathy Sargent

#### **Staff**

Joan Avila  
Winifred Brogan  
Nathan Olson  
Lillian Sanchez  
Julie Thomas

#### **Farm Loan Manager**

(located in Visalia office)

Tom Roberts

#### **Farm Loan Staff**

Patricia Miller  
Slade Childers

**For a list of local  
offices, visit**

**[www.fsa.usda.gov/ca](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ca)**

March 2011

County Newsletter #1

## **SURE Signup**

Signup for the 2009 Crop Year Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) will continue through July 29, 2011. SURE provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disasters which occurred from October 1, 2008 through September 30, 2009. **For SURE, all crops must have been covered by crop insurance, NAP or eligible for waivers for the 2009 crop year.**

A farm enrolled in SURE may be eligible when either:

- a portion of the farm is located in a county covered by a qualifying natural disaster declaration (USDA Secretarial Declarations only) or a contiguous county; or,
- the actual production is less than 50% of the normal production.

Please call for more information or to schedule an appointment

## **DCP & ACRE Program Signup Deadline June 1**

Enrollment for the 2011 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) and the Average Crop Revenue Program (ACRE) has begun and will continue through June 1, 2011. Producers may visit the eDCP automated website or contact FSA for an appointment to visit the office to complete signup. Advance direct payments can be requested. All eligibility requirements must be met prior to any payment being issued for the farm. June 1, 2011 is the mandatory deadline for all ACRE/DCP participants for the 2011 crop year.

## **County Committee Election Results**

Congratulations to Ceil Howe III and Ronda Brooks. Ceil was reelected to represent farmers from the Stratford/ Lemoore area on the County Committee. Ronda will serve as 1<sup>st</sup> 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 Certification**

USDA has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to establish an electronic information exchange process for verifying compliance with the adjusted gross income (AGI) provisions for farm programs. Written consent will be 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 USDA. This agreement ensures that payments are not issued to producers whose AGI exceeds certain limitations. 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 DCP payments; and \$1 million nonfarm average AGI for conservation programs (unless 66% or more comes from farming).

Participants in CCC programs subject to average AGI rules must submit form CCC-927 (Individual) and/or CCC-928 (Legal Entity) to the IRS by June 15 of each year to avoid interruption of program benefits. These forms may be obtained from your local FSA and NRCS offices or online at: [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)

**NOTICE  
TO HISPANIC  
AND/OR  
WOMEN  
FARMERS OR  
RANCHERS  
COMPENSATION  
FOR CLAIMS OF  
DISCRIMINATION**

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 to apply for compensation.

To register your name to receive a claims packet, call the Farmer and Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429 or visit: [www.farmerclaims.gov](http://www.farmerclaims.gov)

The claims package will have detailed information about the eligibility and claims process.



USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## **Foreign Buyers 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.

All individuals who are not U.S. citizens, and 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 (FSA-153) could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent 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.

## **Farming Operation Changes**

If you have bought or sold land, or if you have added or dropped rented land from your operation, make sure you report the changes to the office as soon as possible. You need to provide a copy of your deed or recorded land contract for purchased property. Failure to maintain accurate records with FSA on all land you have an interest in can lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties. Signature authorization may also need to be updated when changes in the operation occur. Producers are reminded to contact the office of a change in operations on a farm so that records can be kept current and accurate.

## **Special Accommodations**

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact the county FSA office staff directly or by phone.

## **Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation Compliance**

Landowners and operators are reminded that in order to receive payments from USDA, compliance with Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions are required. Farmers with HEL determined soils are reminded of tillage, crop residue, and rotation requirements as specified per their conservation plan.

Producers are to notify the USDA Farm Service Agency prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to insure compliance. Failure to obtain advance approval for any of these situations can result in the loss of eligibility and all Federal payments.

## **Power of Attorney**

For those who find it difficult to visit the county office personally because of work schedules, distance, health, etc., FSA has a power of attorney form available that enables you to designate another person to conduct your business at the office. If you are interested, please contact our office or any FSA office near you for more information.

## **Bank Account Changes**

Current policy mandates that FSA payments be electronically transferred into your bank account. In order for timely payments to be made, producers need to notify the FSA county office if your account has been changed or if another financial institution purchases your bank. Payments can be delayed if the FSA office is not aware of updates to your account and routing numbers.

## **Appeal Process**

After an FSA official makes a decision on your request for USDA services or application, you will be sent a letter informing you of the decision and options that can be pursued if you disagree.

Generally, program participants have three 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.

## FSA Signature Policy

Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office staff by either spouse.

There are exceptions to the rule, where spouses may not sign on behalf of each other for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities.

Individual signatures are also required on certain Farm Loan Program and Farm Storage Facility Loan documents.

For more clarification on spousal signature authority, feel free to contact your local FSA office.

### Customer Statement

Producers who have signed up for a USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account can access their farm data via their Customer Statement.

The Customer Statement puts a range of USDA services and programs into a single report that's at your fingertips and available online, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

It allows USDA customers to view their participation, application and payment status in various commodity and conservation programs; information on farm loans; and conservation plan and land unit information.

### Controlled Substance

Any person who is convicted under federal or state law of a controlled substance violation could be ineligible for USDA payments or benefits. Violations include planting, harvesting or growing a prohibited plant. Prohibited plants include marijuana, opium, poppies and other drug producing plants.

## Farm Loan Programs

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.

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.

### IRS Form 1099-G

Producers annually receive CCC-1099-Gs detailing payments producers have received from the Commodity Credit Corporation. The annual report of program payments on CCC-1099-Gs is a service intended to help our customers report taxable income. It is not intended to replace the producers' responsibilities to report income to IRS. FSA staff cannot interpret IRS regulations or advise producers about which payments to report on their income tax returns. However, county office staff can review payments for accuracy.

### 2010 Crop Year Counter Cyclical Advance Payments

2010 crop year advance counter cyclical payments will not be issued for any crops because their effective price exceeds their respective target price. Counter cyclical payments vary with the commodity markets. When commodity prices rise, the counter cyclical payment issued by this office shrinks. This can be reduced to zero if high market prices are sustained throughout the marketing year for the crop. This does not affect the direct payments for 2010 which are fixed regardless of commodity prices.

### Signature Authorization

When signing any FSA documents, signature authorization must be on file with the FSA office if you are signing in the capacity other than yourself as an individual. This would include landowners with revocable trusts signing for a zero share on cash leased land. If a non-FSA document, such as a written cash lease is provided, we are not required to verify signature authority.



Kings County FSA Office  
 680 Campus Drive Suite C  
 Hanford, CA 93230



PRESORTED STANDARD  
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
 DAVIS, CALIFORNIA  
 PERMIT #22

***Please remember to report weather related crop damages to the FSA office and the local Agriculture Commissioners office. Damages should be reported to FSA within 15 days of when the damage is apparent to be considered timely. All prevented planting should be reported within 15 days of the final planting date for the crop***

Interest Rates March 2011	
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%
Farm Operating - Direct	2.500%
Farm Ownership - Direct	4.875%
Conservation Loan	4.875%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.500%
Emergency – Actual Loss	3.750%

Dates to Remember	
Apr 30	Acreage Reporting Deadline – Fall Seeded Crops
June 1	DCP/ACRE Signup Ends
June 15	Program Participants need to send CCC-927 or CCC-928 to IRS
July 15	Acreage Reporting Deadline- Spring Seeded Crops
July 29	SURE 2009 Crop Year Signup Ends

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all of 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, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (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 to USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call toll-free at (866) 632-9992 (English) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (English Federal-relay) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Federal-relay). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.