



COC Election Nominations

**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**

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

June 2011

County Newsletter #2

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committee starts with the nomination of eligible candidates.

Eligible persons include operators, owners and other tenants farming/ranching in the area up for election. The deadline to nominate a candidate for the Kings County Farm Service Agency Local Administrative Area 12 (Hanford /Kingsburg) representative is August 1, 2011. The boundaries of Area 12 are located south to Kansas Avenue, west to 16th Avenue, north to the Fresno County Line, and east to 1st Avenue. 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/fsa0669a_commiteelectform.pdf

Nomination forms for the 2011 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business on Aug. 1, 2011.

Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in an FSA program may be nominated for candidacy 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 for the county committee of the office that administers a producer's farm records. Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters in November and elected members will take office in January 2012.



Crop Reporting

The annual requirement of reporting to the FSA office can be referred to as crop reporting, acreage reporting, or crop certification. Filing an accurate and timely report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of benefits for a variety of Farm Service Agency programs. All cropland on the farm must be reported to receive benefits from the following programs; Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program, Marketing Assistance Loans, Loan Deficiency Payment Program, Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), and Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE)..

The certification form FSA-578, Report of Acreage, must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. The deadline for 2011 fall-seeded crops was April 30, 2011. The producer certification deadline for spring seeded crops is July 15, 2011. In order to provide you with the best service, we ask that you call to schedule an appointment prior to your office visit.

Prevented Planting

Prevented planting is to be reported no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date. Failure to report prevented planting acreage could result in loss of benefits for the SURE program or possibly other disaster assistance programs.

Failed Acreage

Reports of failed acreage must be filed before disposition of the crop, and producers must be able to establish to the satisfaction of the county committee that the crop failed and was prevented from being replanted through the normal planting period because of natural disaster conditions.



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.

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 that a loan can be processed and funded in a timely manner.

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 for an appointment with a farm loan staff member.

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

For additional information on this claims process and other settlement issues contact:

Hispanic and Women Farmer Claims Process:
www.farmerclaims.gov or 1-888-508-4429

Pigford - Black Farmers Discrimination Litigation
www.blackfarmercase.com or 1-866-950-5547

Keepseagle - Native American Farmers Class Action Settlement
www.IndianFarmClass.com or 1-888-233-5506

Changing Banks or Accounts??



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.

Preventing Fraud

The Farm Service Agency supports the Risk Management Agency in the prevention of fraud, waste and abuse of the Federal Crop Insurance Program. FSA conducts yearly compliance checks on behalf of the Risk Management Agency (RMA) and will continue to assist RMA and insurance providers by monitoring crop conditions throughout the growing season. FSA will refer all suspected cases of fraud, waste and abuse directly to RMA. Producers can report suspected cases to the FSA office staff, the RMA office, or the USDA Office of the Inspector General.

Farm Reconstitutions

For FSA program purposes, tracts having the same owner and the same operator are grouped 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. Remember, to be effective for the current year, recons must be requested by **Aug. 1** for farms enrolled in specific programs.

The following are the different methods used when doing a farm recon:

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. In order to use this method the land sold must have been owned for at least three years, or a waiver granted, and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding;

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.

Land Ownership Changes

Has your land been put into trust? All land ownership changes should be reported to FSA, including transactions which result in land being placed into a revocable trust. It is very important that our records be kept up to date. Please note that we are *not* directly connected with the county assessor's office, nor do we receive direct notification from that office when ownership changes. It is the owner's responsibility to inform FSA of any changes. If changes do occur, please provide a copy of the recorded deed as proof of ownership.

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. If you sign a document on behalf of your revocable trust, we also need signature authorization on file, such as a certificate of trust. 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

AGI and the IRS

USDA has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Internal Revenue Service 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 verification report that IRS sends to FSA.**

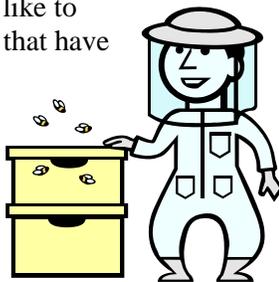
The agreement ensures that payments are not issued to producers whose AGI exceeds certain limits. The limits set in the 2008 Farm Bill are \$500,000 nonfarm average AGI for commodity and disaster programs; \$750,000 farm average AGI for direct payments; and \$1 million nonfarm average AGI for conservation 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 as soon as possible to avoid interruption of program benefits. These forms may be obtained from local FSA and NRCS offices.

Disaster Assistance

The Farm Service Agency would like to remind crop and livestock producers that have recently experienced severe damage from extreme weather conditions that FSA programs are available to assist with recovery.

FSA administers several important programs that help producers recover from disaster damage and livestock deaths. Among the key programs available to address impacts from disasters are the



Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP), the Noninsured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program.

Fact sheets for all of these programs can be found at www.fsa.usda.gov; click on Newsroom, then Fact Sheets.

We encourage all who have suffered a disaster due to the recent severe weather conditions to read the fact sheets and visit the local FSA county office so they get a quick start in the recovery process.

2009 Crop Year SURE Program Signup deadline is July 29, 2011

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. 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 are the conditions that trigger SURE payments:

- At least one crop of economic significance must suffer a 10% production loss due to an eligible disaster condition. (These are crops that contributed or would have contributed at least 5% or more of the total expected revenue from all crops on the farm.)
- Producers in counties declared disaster counties by the Secretary of Agriculture, or in contiguous counties, or those who show proof of an individual loss of at least 50% are eligible to receive SURE payments for crop producer 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.

A SURE calculator is available at:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=diap&topic=sure>. The calculator is not official, but is intended for educational use. A fact sheet and background are also available online.

Please call for more information or to schedule an appointment as soon as possible.

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



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

| Dates to Remember | |
|-------------------|--|
| June 15 | County Committee Nomination Period Begins |
| July 4 | Office Closed – Independence Day Holiday |
| July 15 | 2011 Crop Year spring seeded crops reporting deadline. Planting dates, intended use, tree counts and spacing are needed at the time of the report. |
| July 29 | Deadline for 2009 Crop Year SURE Program |
| August 1 | COC Nomination Form Due in County Office |
| August 1 | Reconstitutions Request Deadline |
| Within 15 days | To be considered timely, damage to crops must be reported to the FSA office within 15 days, after the damage occurs or the date the crop damage becomes apparent. |
| Various Dates | See http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/important_dates.pdf for various NAP insurance purchase deadlines |

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

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.