

May 2013



Kings County FSA Updates

Kings County FSA Office

680 Campus Drive Suite C
Hanford, CA 93230

Phone: 559-585-8732
Fax: 559-584-8715

Office Hours:
8:00 am - 4:30 pm
Monday through Friday

County Executive Director:
Kathy L Sargent

Farm Program Staff:

Joan Avila
Winifred Brogan
Lillian Hernandez
Nathan Olson

County Committee:

Ceil Howe III
Ralph Alcalá Jr.
Brent Gilkey
Michael Miya - Advisor

Farm Loan Manager:
(Located in Visalia Office)
Tom Roberts

Farm Loan Staff:

Patricia Miller
Slade Childers

Phone: 559-734-8732

Crop Reporting

Acreage reports are required for many Farm Service Agency programs. After spring planting, producers should certify their 2013 acreage. 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.** In order to provide producers with better customer service, we request that you call to schedule an appointment prior to visiting the office.

DCP/ACRE Programs Sign-Up Continues

The sign-up period for DCP and ACRE are still open. Producers are encouraged to sign up for DCP before the Aug. 2, 2013, deadline. An even earlier deadline is for ACRE, which will end June 3, 2013.

The 2013 DCP and ACRE program provisions are unchanged from 2012, except that all eligible participants in 2013 may choose to enroll in either DCP or ACRE for the 2013 crop year. This means that eligible producers who were enrolled in ACRE in 2012 may elect to enroll in DCP in 2013 or may re-enroll in ACRE in 2013. Likewise producers who were enrolled in DCP may opt for ACRE enrollment.

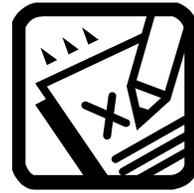
[Read more about DCP and ACRE](#) or contact the office for more information, or an appointment to enroll.

Farm Record Changes

Remember to provide all changes to your farm records to the local FSA office for the current 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 to update your file. If you have previously submitted changes and have not heard back from our office, we are still in the process of clearing a backlog of records changes. Due to the transition to a new computer operating environment, staff members are working diligently to get the changes processed as soon as possible.

2013 County FSA Committee Elections

The election of agricultural producers to the Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees is important to all farmers and ranchers, whether beginning or long-established, large or small operation. 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 2013 election in Kings County will be conducted for the representative for the **Lemoore/Stratford/Avenal** area of the county. The area includes that portion of the county that lies south of Excelsior Avenue, west of 16th Avenue when north of Nevada Ave, and west of 22nd avenue when south of Nevada Avenue. The elected producer will serve a three year term beginning in January 2014.



County Committee (COC) members are a critical component of FSA operations. The intent is to have the COC reflect the makeup of the producers and represent all constituents. This means wherever possible, minorities, women or lower income producers need to be on the committee to speak for these underrepresented groups.

County committees provide local input on:

- Commodity price support loans and payments
- Conservation programs
- Incentive, indemnity and disaster payments for some commodities
- Emergency programs
- Payment eligibility.

FSA county committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws and members apply their judgment and knowledge to make local decisions.

Election Period

June 17, 2013 – The nomination period begins.

Aug. 1, 2013 – This is the last day to file nomination forms (FSA-669A) at the local USDA Service Center.

Nov. 4, 2013 – Ballots mailed to eligible voters.

Dec. 2, 2013 – Last day to return completed ballots to the USDA Service Center.

Jan. 1, 2014 – Newly elected county committee members take office.

Who Can Hold Office

To hold office as a county committee member, a person must meet the basic eligibility criteria:

- Participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA
- Be eligible to vote in a county committee election
- Reside in the local administrative area (LAA) in which the person is a candidate.

Not have been:

- Removed or disqualified from the office of county committee member, alternate or employee
- Removed for cause from any public office or have been convicted of fraud, larceny, embezzlement or any other felony
- Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services.

Nominations

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.

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. Click [here](#) for a nomination form.

Who Can Vote

Agricultural producers of legal voting age may be eligible to vote if they participate or cooperate in any FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm also may be eligible to vote. More information about voting eligibility requirements can be found in the FSA fact sheet titled "FSA County Committee Election – Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a County Committee Member." Producers may contact their local USDA Service Center for more information.

Microloan Program

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) developed the Microloan (ML) program to better serve the unique financial operating needs of beginning, niche and small family farm operations.

FSA offers applicants a Microloan designed to help farmers with credit needs of \$35,000 or less. The loan features a streamlined application process built to fit the needs of new and smaller producers. This loan program will also be useful to specialty crop producers and operators of community supported agriculture (CSA).

Eligible applicants can apply for a maximum amount of \$35,000 to pay for initial start-up expenses such as hoop houses to extend the growing season, essential tools, irrigation and annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents, marketing, and distribution expenses. As financing needs increase, applicants can apply for a regular operating loan up to the maximum amount of \$300,000 or obtain financing from a commercial lender under FSA's Guaranteed Loan Program. A fact sheet is available regarding this program by clicking [here](#).

Individuals interested in applying for a microloan or who would like to discuss other farm loan programs available should contact the Farm Loan Staff in the Tulare County FSA office to setup an appointment. The phone number is (559) 734-8732 Ext 2.

Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Compliance

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

Producers should notify FSA prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to ensure compliance. If you intend to clear any trees to create new cropland, these areas will need to be reviewed to ensure any work will not jeopardize your eligibility for benefits.

Landowners and operators can complete form AD-1026 Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification to determine whether a referral to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is necessary.

For more information on Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation provisions, contact a FSA County Office or visit the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).