



USDA Service Center
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Lancaster, CA 93534

Address:
USDA Service Center
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Web Sites:
FSA: www.fsa.usda.gov
USDA: www.usda.gov

Hours:
Monday-Friday
8:00 AM-4:30 PM

County Committee:
Paul Johnson
Richard Manassero
Terry Munz
Patricia Van Dam

Advisor:
Bennie Moore, Jr.

County Executive Director:
Douglas Brand

Staff:
Marilynn Wells, PT
Becky Romanet, PT

Farm Loan Manager:
Thomas Hunton
(661) 336-0967 ext 116



2010 FSA County Committee Elections

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees is important to ALL farmers and ranchers, whether beginning or long established, with large or small operations. 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.

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 to 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. County committee members apply their judgment and knowledge to make local decisions

Election Period
June 15, 2010 – The nomination period begins. Request nomination forms from the local USDA Service Center or online at:
http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/sa0669a_commiteelectform.pdf

August 2, 2010 - Last day to file nomination forms (FSA-669A) at the local USDA Service Center.

November 5, 2010 - Ballots mailed to eligible voters.

December 6, 2010 - Last day to return voted ballots to the USDA Service Center.

January 1, 2011 - Newly elected county committee members take office.

Local Administrative Areas (LAAs)
The area served by our FSA Committee is divided into four LAAs. One member on the committee represents each LAA and serves a 3-year term. This year, LAA #1 (High Desert of San Bernardino County) is up for election.

- Who Can Hold Office
To hold office as a county committee member, a person must meet the basic eligibility criteria as follows:
• Participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA.
• Be eligible to vote in a county committee election.
• Reside in the LAA in which the person is a candidate.

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 at:
http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/sa0669a_commiteelectform.pdf
Nomination forms for the 2010 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business on Aug. 2, 2010.

Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in an FSA program may be nominated 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 in the office that administers the producer's farm records.

Continued from Page 1: COC Election

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 may also 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 our FSA Office for more information.

Tree Assistance Program (TAP)

Assistance for orchardists and nursery tree growers with weather-related losses can now be obtained through the Tree Assistance Program (TAP). Signup began Monday, May 10, 2010 for growers to apply for benefits under TAP at local FSA offices.

TAP, authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, provides help to orchard and nursery tree growers who produce trees, bushes and vines for commercial purposes, to replant or rehabilitate trees, bushes and vines damaged or destroyed by natural disasters. Christmas tree and nursery tree growers are now also eligible. Trees grown for pulp or timber or grown for commercial purposes are not eligible.

To be eligible for TAP, orchardists and nursery tree growers must:

- Have suffered more than a 15 percent death loss due to the natural disaster after adjustment for normal mortality
- Have owned the eligible trees, bushes, and vines when the natural disaster occurred
- Replace eligible trees, bushes, and vines within 12 months from the date the application is approved.

TAP is a cost-reimbursement program, with payments covering up to 70 percent of replant costs and 50 percent of pruning, removal and other salvaging costs for replacing or salvaging damaged trees.

Producers must also have purchased a policy or plan of insurance under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, or for 2008 crop year a waiver of the risk management purchase requirement could be obtained through a buy-in provision. Eligible losses must have occurred on or after January 1, 2008, and before October 1, 2011.

For more information on the new TAP program, please contact your county FSA office or the website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/tap>

Acresage Reporting Reminder

Acresage reporting time is just around the corner. Please remember that filing an accurate acresage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acresage and prevented planting acresage, can prevent the loss of USDA benefits for a variety of programs.

Failed acresage 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.

Acresage reports are required for most FSA programs. The acresage reporting deadline for most crops (except small grains) is **July 15, 2010**.

Changes to your MILC Contract

Dairy operations are reminded that they are required to notify their county FSA office immediately of any changes that potentially affect the terms, conditions, or participants under the Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC). Changes include, but are not limited to, changes to the starting month, death of producer on the contract, new member joining the operation, member leaving the operation, transfer of shares by sale or other transfer action, or reconstitution.

If you would like to change your production start month for FY2010 through 2012, you must request the change on or before the 14th of the month before the:

- month originally designated as the production start month
- newly selected start month.

For example, if your FY2011 start month is December 2010 and you would like to change it to October 2010, you would have to request the change on or before September 14, 2010. If you would like to change your FY2011 start month from December 2010 to January 2011, you would have to request the change on or before November 14, 2010.

Changes must be made in advance of payment rates being known by the public for both the original start month that the dairy operation is changing from and the start month that the dairy operation is changing to. Otherwise, the production start month can only be changed for the following fiscal year.

Any changes or modifications to an existing MILC contract (CCC-580) must be made by completing and filing a CCC-580M form with our FSA Office. If you filed a CCC-580M form for changes you made to your start month for FY 2010, you may need to file another CCC-580M form for changes you make in FY2011.

MILC Program Payment Rates

Listed below are the MILC payment rates for Fiscal Year 2010 (October 2009 through January 2010). On the first day of each month, the MILC payment rate (applicable for the prior month) will be posted at:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=prsu&topic=mpp-mi>

MILC Payment Rates for Fiscal Year 2010

October 2009	\$0.60300
November 2009	\$0.37350
December 2009	\$0.00000
January 2010	\$0.00000
February 2010	\$0.00000
March 2010	\$0.00000
April 2010	\$0.21150

For more information about the MILC program, you should contact our FSA Office at (661) 942-9549.

SURE Program

The Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disasters incurred in the crop years 2008 through September 30, 2011. 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 conditions trigger SURE payments:

- At least one crop of economic significance must suffer a 10% production loss due to an eligible disaster condition
- Crop of economic significance is a crop that has contributed or would have contributed at least 5% or more of the total expected revenue from all crops on the farm
- Crop is in a county declared a disaster county by the Secretary of Agriculture, or in contiguous counties, or producer shows proof of an individual loss of at least 50%.

SURE payments can apply to crop production 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.

For more information on the SURE program, please contact our FSA Office at (661) 942-9549 ext. 100.

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, direct and guaranteed loans are currently available.

FSA's loan programs are designed to help family farmers obtain loans and loan guarantees, and conduct business planning. In many cases, these are beginning farmers who need additional financial and business acumen to qualify for commercial credit. In other cases, they are farmers who have suffered financial setbacks from natural disasters, or who need additional resources with which to establish and maintain profitable farming operations.

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 \$1,112,000. Producers are encouraged to apply early.

FSA employees can help you complete the necessary application and other forms, and help you understand what information is required and where to find it. To find out more about FSA loans, contact Tom Hunton, Farm Loan Manager at (661) 336-0967 ext. 116.

USDA Emergency Farm Loans

On March 8, 2010, President Obama declared a disaster designation in six primary California counties, including Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties. Orange County is included as a contiguous county. The designation is based on damages and losses caused by severe winter storms, flooding, and debris and mud flows.

Effective March 8, 2010, Emergency Loans are available to any eligible applicant with qualifying production losses or physical losses in the counties named above. Loan approval will be contingent upon the availability of funds. Emergency loans applications will be received through November 8, 2010.

For more information, contact Tom Hunton, Farm Loan Manager at (661) 336-0967 ext. 116.

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Visit our Web site at: www.fsa.usda.gov

SPECIAL ACCOMODATIONS

Special accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impaired, or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, please call our office at (661) 942-9549.

CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINT PROCESS

Any person, class or group of persons may file a discrimination complaint within 180 days of an alleged discriminatory action. Complaints may be filed in writing or orally with the agency head, any designated agency official or the Secretary of Agriculture, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. Assistance in filing a complaint can be obtained by calling or visiting any FSA office.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all 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, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance programs. (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 USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202)-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."