



# NEWSLETTER



## Lancaster Farm Service Agency Office

Serving Los Angeles-Orange-San Bernardino Counties

44811 N. Date Ave, Suite B, Lancaster, CA 93534

### 2011 Supplemental Revenue Assistance (SURE) Program Applications

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) will continue to accept SURE applications for 2011 crop losses through June 7, 2013. The SURE Program provides payments to producers when crop revenues are less than the crop guarantee. The SURE Program payment is equal to 60 percent of the difference between the crop guarantee and revenue. To be eligible, the producer must have at least one crop with a 10 percent production loss.

To determine the guarantee and revenue for the SURE Program, all crops on all farms for a producer are included in the calculation. Payments under the SURE Program are limited to \$100,000.

To be eligible for the 2011 SURE Program, producers must have crop insurance on all insurable crops. For crops that are not covered by crop insurance, producers must have purchased NAP coverage through FSA. The Crop Insurance and NAP purchase requirement is waived for crops that are not economically significant to the farming operation. In addition, producers must have at least one crop with a 10 percent production loss in the Secretarial Disaster Designation for the county or a 50% loss in actual crop production.

For more information concerning the 2011 SURE program, contact your local FSA office or visit the FSA website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/).

### County Committee Election Results

Congratulations to **Bennie Moore, Jr.** and **Dan Manassero** who were recently elected to serve on the Los Angeles-Orange-San Bernardino County FSA Committee. Bennie Moore, Jr. was elected to serve as a representative for northern Los Angeles County (LAA-4). Dan Manassero was elected to serve as a representative of southern Los Angeles County/Orange County (LAA-3). **Basilio Dorado** was elected to serve as 1<sup>st</sup> alternate in LAA-3.

The County FSA Committee is the farmer-elected body that is responsible for administrating USDA farm programs at the local level.

Special thanks go out to **Terry Munz** and **Richard Manassero** for their past years of service as County Committee members. Both Terry Munz and Richard Manassero provided invaluable service as County Committee members and showed commitment and dedication to the farmers they served.

Also, 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.

## Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

The noninsured crop disaster assistance program (NAP) is a federally funded program that helps producers reduce their risk when growing food and fiber crops, specialty crops and crops for livestock feed. These benefits are only available for crops for which the catastrophic level of crop insurance is not available. Application for coverage must be filed by the applicable crop's application closing date.

Production records for all crops must be reported to FSA no later than the acreage reporting date for the crop for the following year. FSA requires that any production reported in a loss year be verified according to agency specifications. *NAP losses must be reported within 15 days of loss.*

## IRS Form 1099 Changes

Calendar year 2012 brought changes to the way FSA reports farm program payments to the producer and to the IRS.

In past years, IRS Forms 1099-G would be issued to show all program payments received from the Farm Service Agency, regardless of the amount.

For calendar year 2012, producers whose total reportable payments from FSA were less than \$600 will not receive IRS Form 1099-G. Also, producers who receive payments from more than one county will only receive one Form 1099-G if the total of all payments from all counties is \$600 or more.

The same changes will apply to producers and vendors who normally receive IRS Form 1099-MISC from FSA.

## Controlled Substance

Any person 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.

## Farming Operation Changes

Producers who have bought or sold land, or added or dropped rented land from their operation must report those changes to the FSA office as soon as possible. A copy of the deed or recorded land contract for purchased property is needed to maintain accurate records with FSA. Failure to report changes can lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties. While making record updates, be sure to update signature authorizations. Making record changes now will save time in the spring.

## Hispanic and Women Farmer and Rancher Claims Period

Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA in past decades can file claims until March 25, 2013.

The process offers a voluntary alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or female farmer and rancher who can prove that USDA denied their applications for loan or loan servicing assistance for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000.

As announced in February 2011, the voluntary claims process will make available at least \$1.33 billion for cash awards and tax relief payments, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief to eligible Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers. There are no filing fees to participate in the program.

USDA will continue reaching out to potential Hispanic and female claimants around the country to inform those who may be eligible for this program.

**Website:** [www.farmerclaims.gov](http://www.farmerclaims.gov)

**Phone:** 1-888-508-4429

**Deadline for Claims:** March 25, 2013.

Claimants can obtain a claims package in the mail by calling 1-888-509-4429 or by visiting the website [www.farmerclaims.gov](http://www.farmerclaims.gov). Public meetings are also being held in many areas to share further information. Contact your nearest FSA office to get a schedule of meetings in your area.

## **Bank Account Changes**

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

## **Appeal Process**

After an FSA official makes a decision on a request for USDA services or application, the producer will be sent a letter informing him/her of the decision and options that can be pursued.

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. County office staff has further details.

## **Highly Erodible Land and Wetland 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 is required. Farmers with HEL determined soils must comply with 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 insure 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 (HEL) 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/](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/).

## **Foreign Buyers Notification**

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their purchases or sales of property to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency 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.

## **Special Accommodations**

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should notify the county FSA office staff in person or by phone. This service is provided for office visits and any special event sponsored by FSA.

## **Power of Attorney**

For those who find it difficult to visit the county office because of work schedules, distance, health, etc., FSA has a power of attorney form available that allows producers to designate another person to conduct business at the office. If interested, contact our office or any Farm Service Agency office for more information.

## **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. Spouses may not sign on behalf of each other for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities.

**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.



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**Sign Up for FSA “Fence Post” for Daily Updates**

The Farm Service Agency *Fence Post* is an online newsletter that is updated on an almost daily basis. It contains articles of interest on the agency’s programs and departments, as well as success stories from the field. To access *Fence Post* visit <http://fsa.blogs.govdelivery.com/>. On this website, producers can sign up for *Fence Post* updates by putting an email address in box that says “Get Email Updates” and then navigating to the publication’s sign up check box.

**Selected Interest Rates for  
January 2013**

Farm Operating Direct	1.250%
Farm Ownership Direct	3.125%
Farm Ownership Direct, Joint Financing	5.000%
Farm Ownership Direct Down Payment,	1.500%
Emergency	2.250%
Farm Storage Facility – 7 year	1.125%
Farm Storage Facility – 10 year	1.625%
Farm Storage Facility – 12 year	1.875%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.125%

**Dates to Remember**

January 1	New Years Day – FSA Office closed
January 2	Hive reporting date for Honey
January 15	Acreage Reporting date for Strawberries
January 21	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – FSA Office Closed
January 31	NAP 2013 application closing date for Apples
February 18	Presidents Day – FSA Office Closed
March 1	NAP 2013 application closing date for Annual Crops
March 25	Hispanic & Women Farmer and Rancher Claims Period deadline date
June 7	SURE Program Application Deadline

**County Office Staff**

**County Executive Director**  
Douglas Brand

**Program Technician**  
Marilynn Wells

**County Committee**  
Bennie Moore, Jr.  
Dan Manassero  
Paul Johnson  
Patricia Van Dam

**COC Advisor**  
Currently Vacant

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

**Phone:** 661- 942-9549 ext. 2  
**Fax:** 661-942-5503

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