



# Madera County News

Madera County  
USDA Service Center

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**Hours**  
Monday - Friday  
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**County Committee**  
Lance Shebulet - Chair  
Ryan Jones - Vice  
Jugdev Gill - Member  
Reise Soares

**Staff**  
Joe Grillo - CED

Program Technicians  
Debbie Cook  
Audrey Hibdon  
Nancy Talley  
Ted Van Styen - COT

Loan Department  
Melanie Fry  
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NRCS  
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Dennis Dudley  
Garry Forde

## Eligibility Buy-In Waiver for Supplemental Disaster Assistance Deadline Rapidly Approaching

Producers only have until September 16<sup>th</sup> to participate in the Eligibility Buy-In program which would enable them to enroll in potential 2008 disaster programs. Producers who did not purchase FCIC / MPCIC or NAP insurance for all harvestable crops in the 2008 crop year and are interested in participating in 2008 disaster programs are encouraged to contact the county office soon. More detailed information about the program is included further in this newsletter.

### *2008 DCP Signup Continues*

Producers have until September 30, 2008 to sign up for the 2008 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment Program (DCP). Producers can fill out their 2008 DCP contract at any USDA Farm Service Agency County Office. Sign-up can also be completed online. You can choose payment options, assign crop shares and sign and submit contracts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

FSA computes DCP payments using base acres and payment yields established for each farm. Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. For 2008, eligible producers may request to receive an advance payment of 22 percent of the direct payment for each commodity associated with the farm. FSA will issue advance direct payments as soon as practical after enrollment. Final direct payments will be issued after Oct. 1, 2008.

Counter-cyclical payments vary depending on market prices, and are issued only when the effective price for a commodity is below its target price (which takes into account the direct payment rate, market price and loan rate).

For all eligibility requirements or addition information, contact your local office.

### *Buy-In Waiver for Supplemental Disaster Assistance*

Producers can establish 2008 eligibility for the new disaster assistance programs by paying a fee as required by the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (the 2008 Act).

Ordinarily producers who wish to participate in the new disaster programs would need crop insurance or non-insured crop disaster assistance (NAP) coverage on all farms in all counties in which they have an interest. Since the 2008 Act was enacted after the application periods had closed for those programs, producers who did not have insurance coverage could not comply with this requirement in order to be eligible. However, the 2008 Act authorizes a waiver that allows producers to pay a fee, called a "buy-in" fee, to be eligible for the new disaster assistance programs.

The buy-in fee is due no later than Sept. 16, 2008, 90 days after the date of enactment, as required by the 2008 Act. Payment of the applicable fees will allow the producer to be eligible for financial assistance under the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE), Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), and other disaster assistance programs. Those who miss this opportunity



will **not** be eligible for 2008 disaster assistance. Producers are also reminded that the payment of the applicable buy-in fee does **not** provide the producer crop insurance or NAP coverage; it only affords eligibility for the 2008 disaster programs.

The buy-in fee for 2008 eligibility is \$100 per crop, but not more than \$300 per producer per county, or \$900 total per producer for all counties less any previously paid fees for CAT and/or NAP. Contact your local FSA County Office for details or to pay applicable fees.

### ***NAP Coverage – Plan for 2009***

The Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) was designed to reduce financial losses that occur when natural disasters cause a catastrophic loss of production or prevented planting of an eligible crop by providing coverage equivalent to catastrophic (CAT) insurance. Statute limits NAP to each commercial crop or agricultural commodity, except livestock, for which CAT is not available.

**NOTE: The application deadline date for 2009 NAP coverage has been extended to Dec. 1, 2008 for those crops whose insurance deadlines were prior to Dec. 1, 2008**

Producers who already have coverage on 2008 NAP crops may choose to continue coverage on the same crop or crops for 2009, if the applicable service fee is submitted by the application closing date. A new CCC-471, application for coverage is not required to be signed when applying for continuous coverage of the same crop or crops.

Producers who choose to add a new crop(s) or delete a crop(s) from previous year's coverage or changing crop shares must file a new CCC-471 with signatures and pay the applicable service fee of \$250 per crop up to \$750 per county.

Producers with 2008 NAP coverage must remember to complete the following to qualify for benefits:

- Timely file acreage reports and keep track of harvested production using acceptable methods. For example, bale weights or other means of determining quantities of hay are required.
- File a "Notice of Loss" within 15 days of when a loss is apparent.

For more information on NAP coverage please contact your nearest Farm Service Agency office.

### ***Payment Limitations***

USDA payments and benefits are subject to producer eligibility and limitation provisions as defined by law. Documents and forms to determine eligibility and limitation are reviewed on an annual basis.

It is the producer's responsibility to report changes in the farming operation that may affect payment eligibility and payment limitation.

The following limitations apply to Direct and Counter-cyclical Program payments for the 2008 contract year. For all covered commodities: \$40,000 for direct payments and \$65,000 for counter-cyclical payments.

The Environmental Quality Incentive Program has a \$450,000 payment limitation.

The Conservation Reserve Program annual limit is \$50,000 per person.

Entities such as corporations, limited partnerships, trusts and estates are required to provide names, addresses, and ID numbers of their members. These entities should also identify every payment under more than one entity.

**Adjusted Gross Income** - Effective through 2008, an individual or entity shall **not** be eligible for certain program benefits during a crop, program or fiscal year if both of the following apply.

- The three-year average adjusted gross income for the individual or entity exceeds \$2.5 million; and
- Less than 75 percent of the average AGI is derived from farming, ranching or forestry operations.

### ***Reasonable Accommodations***

Reasonable accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If special accommodations are required, please call the Farm Service Agency county office staff, and we will be happy to make any arrangements that are necessary.

## FUN FACTS

**Did you know that in Japan, the most popular topping for pizza is squid?** In the United States the most popular pizza topping is pepperoni. Americans eat approximately 100 acres of pizza EACH DAY, or about 350 slices per second. October is Pizza Month!

**Almonds are actually stone fruits related to cherries, plums and peaches ?** California produces 80% of the world's supply of almonds. The world's largest almond factory is in Sacramento, California. It processes 2 million pounds of almonds a day. **Chocolate** manufacturers currently use 40% of the world's almonds.

**Which vegetable do Americans eat the most?** Potatoes. The average person in the United States eats 140 pounds of potatoes every year. Bet you didn't realize that the potato was the first vegetable to be grown in space!

**Did you know there's a marathon coming to Fresno on November 9, 2008?**

FSA employees and NRCS employees will be competing in the relay event. Put your team together and come have some fun.

To learn more about the **Two Cities Marathon** and how you can improve your health and run a marathon, half marathon or a 4 person relay go to [www.RunFresno.com](http://www.RunFresno.com)



## Farm Loan Programs

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers loans for farmers and ranchers to purchase farmland and finance agricultural operations. FSA loan programs are designed to help producers who are temporarily unable to obtain private or commercial credit. In many cases, applicants are beginning farmers who have insufficient net worth to qualify for financing through a commercial lender. In other instances, borrowers might have suffered setbacks from natural disasters or might be persons with limited resources.

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 \$949,000. Emergency loans are always direct loans for farmers who may have suffered physical or production losses in disaster areas designated by a Presidential or Secretarial disaster declaration. Rural Youth Loans, Loans to Beginning Farmers and loans for socially disadvantaged applicants are also available through FSA.

For detail information loan eligibility or the different available loan programs, just contact the county office staff for an appointment with a farm loan officer.

## Beginning Farmers & Ranchers

If you are a farmer or rancher who has substantially participated in the farming operation for at least three years but no more than 10 years, you may qualify for beginning farmer targeted loan funds with the Farm Service Agency. The program is designed to assist these farmers by providing direct and guaranteed loans when they are unable to obtain financing from commercial credit sources.

If you believe this program could be of benefit to you, please contact the county office for more information. FSA loan officials will be happy to arrange an appointment to meet with you and discuss your options.

## County Committee Elections

The Farm Service Agency is currently preparing a slate of candidates to be placed on the county committee election ballot. Each year, an election is held in a different LAA to replace the committee member whose three-year term is expiring. In counties with three LAAs, one seat is up for election. The LLA area up for election this year is the area east of Highway 99 from the Merced County line down to the Fresno County line. The following are candidate eligibility requirements for becoming a COC member.

### Candidate Eligibility

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

- 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
- 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.

### Voting

Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Nov. 3, and must be returned to the county office by the close of business on Dec. 1, or postmarked by midnight Dec. 1, 2008.

Agricultural producers of legal voting age can 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 on an entire farm can also vote.

No one can be denied the right to vote because of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation or marital or family status.

For additional clarification about county committee elections, contact your local county office staff.

## New Farm Bill - Deadlines for California Producers

<b>2008 Crop and CRP Acreage Reporting</b>	Sign-up Deadline: <b>August 15, 2008</b>
<b>2008 Disaster Assistance “Buy-In” Fee</b> For 2008 Crops, producers must submit a “buy-in” fee to assure disaster program eligibility.	Buy-In Deadline: <b>September 16, 2008</b>
<b>2008 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payment Program (DCP)</b>	Sign-up Deadline: <b>September 30, 2008</b>
<b>2009 NAP Applications</b> Extended deadline for crops with NAP deadlines prior to December 1.	Sign-up Deadline: <b>December 1, 2008</b>

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