

February 2013



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Monterey, Santa Cruz, San Mateo FSA Updates

DEAR PRODUCERS: Welcome to the new GovDelivery bulletins and updates service from your Monterey, Santa Cruz, San Mateo County FSA office. Note that you are welcome to request to receive bulletins from more than one state and/or county and can add or remove individual subscriptions at any time. ***"Si desea una copia de este Boletín Informativo en Español, contacte oficina del condado al 831-424-7377 ext. 103"***

Monterey County FSA Office

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Office Hours:

8:00 am - 4:30 pm

County Committee Election Results

Congratulations to the following County Committee members who were elected to represent farmers and ranchers for the 2013 term:

Sam Mann, Regular member, Local Administrative Area 4 (LAA#4)
Nita Gizdich, 1st Alternate member, Local Administrative Area 4 (LAA#4)
Alicia Alvarez, 2nd Alternate, Local Administrative Area 4 (LAA#4)
Bill Roth, Regular member, Local Administrative Area 3 (LAA#3)
Tony Serrano, Advisor to the County Committee

New Microloan Program!

FSA has developed the Microloan (ML) program to better serve the unique financial operating needs of beginning, niche and the smallest of family farm operations. Microloans are a special subcategory of direct operating loans that provide more flexible access to credit for smaller farming operations. The Microloan Program can be used for expenses such as annual crop inputs, marketing and distribution expenses, purchase of livestock and equipment and minor farm improvements. This program simplifies the loan application process and reduces some of the paperwork associated with operating loans. Eligible applicants may obtain a microloan for up to \$35,000.

2013 Direct & Countercyclical Payment Program (DCP) and Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program

The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012, authorized a one-year extension of the DCP program. Enrollment began on February 19, 2013 and **ends on August 2, 2013**. This program provides income support to producers based on historical acreage and yields on specific commodities. Producers must share in the risk of producing the crop, report all cropland on the farm, comply with HEL land conservation and Wetland provisions, comply with average adjusted gross income limitation provisions, meet the requirements to be actively engaged in farming and use base acres for agricultural use. Under the ACRE program, producers may receive revenue-based payments instead of price-based payments under DCP. Enrollment for ACRE must be made by June 3, 2013. For more information and an appointment, please contact the office. NOTE: Due to very limited staff, in order to serve you, please call the office in advance.

Conservation Reserve Program Sign-Up #45

A four-week general CRP sign-up will be held **beginning May 20, 2013 and ending on June 14, 2013**. Land that is not currently enrolled in CRP may be offered for enrollment during CRP sign-up 45, as well as CRP contracts expiring on September 30, 2013. Some of the requirements of CRP are: land must be cropland that is planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity for four of the previous six crop years from 2002 to 2007, land must be physically and legally capable of being planted (no easements or other restrictions), and producers must have owned or operated the land for 12 months prior to the end of CRP sign-up. In addition, one of the following must be met: land must have a weighted average erosion index of 8 or higher, land must be located in a national or state CRP conservation priority area, or land must be expiring from a CRP contract on Sept. 30, 2013. For detailed information and fact sheets, go to FSA Internet at www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA.

Hispanic and Women Claims of Discrimination

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.

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. There are no filing fees to participate in the program. Claimants can obtain a claims package in through the toll-free number or by visiting the website below. Even if not complete, the claims packet should be submitted by the deadline.

Website: www.farmerclaims.gov

Phone: 1-888-508-4429

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

MILC Contracts Extended

Dairy producers enrolled in the Milk Income Loss Contract program (MILC) will have their contracts automatically extended through Sept. 30, 2013. There is no need to re-enroll in the program. The MILC program was part of several FSA-related programs that were continued with the extension of the 2008 Farm Bill. Dairy operations may select a new production start month and to do so must visit their local office between Feb. 1 and Feb. 28, 2013 (relief period.)

2011 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program

The Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program provides assistance to producers suffering crop losses due to natural disasters occurring through Sept. 30, 2011. To receive SURE payments, an eligible producer must have qualifying losses of at least 10 percent production loss affecting at least one crop of economic significance due to natural disaster on a farm in a primary or contiguous disaster declared county. Monterey County is a contiguous disaster declared county in 2011. Producers outside a declared disaster county (Santa Cruz and San Mateo Counties) are eligible if they experience production losses greater than or equal to 50 percent of normal production in the farm. To be eligible for SURE, a producer must have obtained a policy or plan of insurance for all crops through the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation and obtained Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, if available, from the Farm Service Agency. Eligible farmers and ranchers who meet the definition of "Socially Disadvantaged," "Limited Resource," or "Beginning Farmer and Rancher," do not have to meet this requirement. Forage crops intended for grazing are not eligible for SURE benefits. **Deadline to apply for the 2011 SURE Program is June 7, 2013.**

Payment Limitations (PL)

All payment eligibility and payment limitation provisions, including AGI limitations, are extended for the 2013 crop year, program year, and fiscal year. All rules and requirements effective for 2012 program payments and benefits are applicable to eligible recipients of 2013 program payment and benefits. This includes the requirements of actively engaged in farming, cash-rent tenant, substantive change, minor child, and spousal provisions. Payments will continue to be limited by direct attribution to person and legal entity. Additional information on payment limitations is available at FSA county offices or online at: www.fsa.usda.gov

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. 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 20250-9450, 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).