



# Riverside-San Diego County Farm Service News

## Farm Service Agency California

### Riverside-San Diego

82-901 Bliss Ave  
Indio, CA 92201  
Ph 760/347-3675  
Fx 760/342-5346  
www.fsa.usda.gov/ca

### Hours

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

### County Committee

David Zieder  
Efrin Castro  
Jack Seiler  
Raymond Lodge

### Introducing New County Executive Director

Desireé K. Houston

Ms. Houston started her career with the FSA in June of 2007 as a Program Technician in the San Luis Obispo County Office. In October of 2007, she was hired as a trainee to become an Executive Director and trained in the Fresno County Office until December 2008, when she was hired by the Riverside-San Diego County Committee.

Ms. Houston is a native to the Coachella Valley as she was born and raised in Indio, CA until she went off to college. She returns home as an Alumni of Cal Poly, SLO and enthusiastic to serve the farmers and ranchers of Riverside and San Diego Counties.

Welcome the Riverside-San Diego FSA Desireé!

## DCP Signup Underway

Signup has started for the 2009 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment (DCP) Program for farms with base acres. Signup will continue until June 1, 2009. The June 1, 2009 deadline is mandatory for all participants. FSA will not accept any late-filed applications.

FSA computes DCP Program 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 2009, you may request to receive advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment for each commodity associated with the farm. FSA will issue advance direct payments later this month. Counter-cyclical payment rates vary depending on market prices and are issued only when the effective price for a commodity is statutorily set below its target price.

Producers who are eligible for the DCP Program will also be eligible to enroll in the Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program. The enrollment period for the ACRE Program will begin in the spring. You may first enroll in the DCP Program, receive advance direct payments and then later modify your enrollment to include the ACRE program or you may wait and elect to enroll in DCP and ACRE at the same time in spring 2009.

## MILC Sign Up Underway

Signup for the Milk Income Loss Contract Program (MILC) is underway and will continue through the program's expiration date, Sept. 30, 2012.

The 2008 Farm Bill reauthorizes the MILC Program, which operates similarly to the counter-cyclical payment program for crops, and makes three key changes in program operation. Under the Farm Bill, the MILC

payment rate and the per-operation poundage limit are modified, depending on when the milk is produced. In addition, a "feed cost adjuster," is introduced over the life of the 2008 Act, which adjusts the \$16.94 per hundredweight (cwt.) benchmark price upward depending on the cost of feed rations. When available, MILC payments are based on a payment rate percentage that is multiplied by the difference between a now-flexible target (\$16.94 per cwt. or higher) and the specific month's Boston Class I price of milk.

The 2008 Farm Bill made changes to the provisions for payment eligibility and adjusted gross income (AGI). If the individual or entity has non-farm AGI greater than \$500,000, the individual or entity is not eligible for MILC benefits. For more information on the MILC program, contact the USDA Service Center located in Indio, CA.

## MILC Town Hall Meeting

Representatives of the Farm Service Agency will be conducting a Town Hall Meeting to discuss the Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) program. The town hall meeting will be held at the Chino Fairgrounds (Brinderson Hall) 5410 Edison Ave, Chino at 10:00 a.m. on February 5, 2009.

## 2005-2007 Crop Disaster Program Deadline

On January 15, 2009, the closing date for the 2005 through 2007 Crop Disaster Program (CDP) was announced. CDP began on October 15, 2007 and will close on **February 27, 2009.**

All CDP applications, FSA-840, and all supporting documentation must be submitted to the Riverside-San Diego County

### (Deadline Continued)

Office **no later than February 27, 2009.**

The ending date applies to both Quantity and Quality provisions of the program.

All crop year 2005 through 2007 CDP applications submitted by producers after close of business day February 27, 2009, shall be disapproved because the applications were not filed during the application period.



### Payment Limits & Direct Attribution

To qualify for commodity and disaster programs under the new farm bill, applicants now must adhere to new **Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)** restrictions. The AGI ceiling limitation was reduced from \$2.5 million from all sources to a three-year average **non-farm AGI of \$500,000.** Also, under the new regulations, an individual or entity must have a 3-year average AGI less than or equal to \$750,000 per year from farm income in order to qualify for direct payments issued under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP).

For conservation programs, the average nonfarm AGI limitation is \$1 million or less for eligibility. However, an individual or entity who has non-farm AGI in excess of \$1 million remains eligible for conservation programs only if 66.66 percent or more of the total AGI is derived from farming, ranching and forestry operations. In addition, the AGI limitation for conservation programs may be waived on a case-by-case basis if it is determined that environmentally sensitive land of special significance would be protected.

Another change in eligibility is that program payments are limited by direct attribution of payment totals directly to individuals or indirectly to individuals through entities.

A legal entity is defined as an entity created under Federal or State law that owns land or an agricultural commodity, product or livestock. Through direct attribution, payment limitation is based on the total payments received by the entity and also the individual, both directly and indirectly as an officer, partner or shareholder in an entity. Qualifying spouses are eligible to be considered separate persons for payment limitation purposes, rather than being automatically combined under one limitation.



Also, individuals and entities must be "actively engaged in farming" with

respect to a farming operation in order to be eligible for specified payments and benefits. To be "actively engaged in farming," the individual or entity must make significant contributions to the farming operation of: (1) capital, equipment, land, or a combination; and (2) personal labor or active personal management, or a combination. For more information on how these provisions apply to your own situation, contact the Indio FSA office.

### County Committee Election Results

Congratulations to David Zieders! David was elected to represent farmers from West End Riverside on the county committee. David was elected to his three year consecutive term.

The election results for Local Administrative Area 1 are:

David Zeiders — Elected to the county committee (COC),

Ike Boostma — 1<sup>st</sup> alternate to COC,

Chris Lankford— 2<sup>nd</sup> alternate to COC

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.

The committee members will hold their organizational meeting in January to determine who will serve as the county committee chairman and vice-chairman.

### Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA.

Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA with 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form 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.

## Controlled Substance

Any person who is 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.

## Power of Attorney

For experiencing difficulties visiting the county office because of work schedules, distance, health or other reasons, FSA has a power of attorney form available that enables you to designate another person to conduct your business at the office. If you are interested, please contact our office or any Farm Service Agency office near you for more information.

## Payment Deposits – New

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



## Appeal Process

After an FSA official makes a decision on your request or application for USDA services, you will be sent a letter informing you of the decision and options you can pursue if you disagree.

Generally, appellants 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.

## FSA Signature Policy

Using the correct signature when doing business with FSA can save time and prevent a delay in program benefits. The following are FSA signature guidelines:

- A married woman shall sign her given name: Mrs. Mary Doe, not Mrs. John Doe
- For a minor, FSA requires the minor's signature and one from an eligible parent. Note, by signing the applicable document, the parent

is liable for actions of the minor and may be liable for refunds, liquidated damages, etc

- When signing on one's behalf the signature must agree with the name typed or printed on the form, or be a variation that does not cause the name and signature to be in disagreement. Example - John W. Smith is on the form. The signature may be John W. Smith or J.W. Smith or J. Smith. Or Mary J. Smith may be signed as Mrs. Mary Joe Smith, M.J. Smith, Mary Smith, etc

- FAXED signatures will be accepted for certain forms and other documents provided the acceptable program forms are approved for FAXED signatures. Producers are responsible for the successful transmission and receipt of FAXED information.

Examples of documents **not** approved for FAXED signatures include:

- Promissory note
- Assignment of payment
- Joint payment authorization
- NAP actual production history and approved yield record
- Acknowledgement of commodity certificate purchase
- Financing statement
- UCC financing statement

- Spouses may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and CCC programs in which either has an interest, unless written notification denying a spouse this authority has been provided to the county office

- Spouses shall not sign on behalf of each other as an authorized signatory for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations, or other similar entities

- All members of a general partnership must sign for the general partnership unless an individual is authorized to act on the behalf of the general partnership and bind all members

- Spouses may sign on behalf of each other's individual interest in a partnership, unless notification denying a spouse that authority is provided to the county office

- Acceptable signatures for general partnerships, joint ventures, corporations, estates, and trusts shall consist of an indicator "by" or "for" the individual's name, individual's name and capacity, or individual's name, capacity, and name of entity

For additional clarification on proper signatures contact your local FSA office.

Selected Interest Rates for January 2009	
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.50 %
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	3.00 %
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	4.875 %
Limited Resource Loans	5.00 %
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50 %
Emergency Loans	3.75 %

Dates to Remember	
Jan. 12	<b>SURE Buy-In Deadline</b> – 2009 Citrus, Avocado, Nursery Crops (insurable only)
Jan. 19	Martin Luther King Day - Office Closed
Jan. 28- 30	National Cattlemen’s Beef Assn Trade Show – Phoenix, AZ
Jan. 31	<b>NAP Deadline</b> – 2009 Apple Crop
Jan. 31	<b>Crop Insurance Deadlines</b> – 2009 AGR, Fruit/Nut Trees, Fresh/Processed Tomatoes, Table Grapes
Feb. 5	<b>MILC Town Hall Meeting:</b> Chino Fairgrounds (Brinderson Hall) 10:00a
Feb. 27	<b>2005-2007 CDP Application Closing Date</b>

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its program 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 program. (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 to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.