

*San Benito/Santa
Clara County*

**March 2008
Newsletter 2**

**U.S. Department of
Agriculture**

**Farm Service Agency
San Benito/Santa Clara**
2337 Technology Pkwy., Ste A
Hollister, CA 95023
831.637.4360 x 2
831.636.7643 Fax

Websites:

FSA: www.fsa.usda.gov
USDA: www.usda.gov
Farm Bill:
www.usda.gov/farmbill

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

County Committee:

**Wayne Shingai
Nenette Corotto
Joseph Gonzales**

County Executive Director:

Jeannine Leyva

Office Staff:

Rebekah Reische, PT

FSA NEWS

NEW DISASTER PROGRAMS

On May 25, 2007, President Bush signed into law the “U.S. Troop Readiness, Veteran’s Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007 (2007 Act). The 2007 Act provides approximately \$3 billion in agricultural disaster aid for America’s farmers and ranchers.

Specifically, the 2007 Act provides funds for a **Crop Disaster Program, Livestock Indemnity Program, Livestock Compensation Program, and Dairy Disaster Assistance Program**. This Newsletter summarizes the disaster aid programs of the 2007 Act.

Crop Disaster Program Signup

The *Crop Disaster Program (CDP)* provides benefits to farmers who suffered quantity and quality losses to 2005, 2006, or 2007 crops. CDP signup for quantity losses began on October 15, 2007. USDA will announce and conduct CDP sign-up for quality losses as soon as possible.

Losses from natural disasters may qualify for financial assistance if the crop was planted, or, in the case of prevented plantings, for crops that would have been planted before December 31, 2007. Producers who incurred qualifying losses in 2005, 2006 or 2007 can and should apply for benefits for every year and will be paid the highest dollar amount. The calculation is complex; prices for insurable crops are not the same between all three years, eligibility may not be the same for all three years. Participants may apply for loss benefits on multiple commodities as long as the losses occurred in the same crop year.

Only producers who obtained crop insurance coverage or coverage under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program for the year of loss will be eligible for CDP benefits. Producers must have suffered quantity losses in excess of 35%. For most crops, the calculation will compare the production amount to the higher of the county yield or the producer’s actual production history. The amount of loss in excess of 35% will be eligible for quantity payments at 42% of the payment rate.

In addition to quantity loss payments, payments for quality reductions due to eligible conditions in excess of 25% may be provided. To receive quality payments, producers must suffer an economic loss to quality-affected production of at least 25% of the expected value.

If you would like to apply for CDP or have any questions regarding eligibility, feel free to contact our office and ask for Jeannine or Rebekah at (831) 637-4360 ext. 2.

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Livestock Compensation Program

The *Livestock Compensation Program (LCP)* compensates livestock producers for feed losses on non-irrigated grazing land resulting from natural disasters occurring between Jan.1, 2005, and Dec. 31, 2007.

Producers in primary or contiguous counties declared secretarial disaster areas or counties declared presidential disaster areas between January 1, 2005, and December 31, 2007, are eligible. Producers incurring a loss in more than one of the 2005, 2006 or 2007 calendar years must choose only one year for which they want to receive benefits.

Signup for LCP began on September 10, 2007. *An ending signup date has not been established.*

The following types of livestock that will be eligible for LCP: dairy cattle, beef cattle, buffalo, beefalo, equine, poultry, elk, reindeer, sheep, goats, swine or deer.

Producers will not be penalized if they reduced the average number of livestock they owned for grazing during the production year for which assistance is being provided. Producers may receive a maximum of \$80,000 in LCP benefits.

For more information on the LCP program, contact our office and ask for Rebekah at (831) 637-4360 Ext.104.

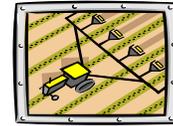
DDAP III Sign Up Resumes

The *Dairy Disaster Assistance Program (DDAP III)* encourages eligible dairy producers who may have suffered losses during 2005, 2006, or 2007 can now apply to receive benefits under the Dairy Disaster Assistance Program III (DDAP III) beginning March 5. The final rule published in the Federal Register on March 4 specifies that this newly reopened sign up period ends on May 5, 2008.

FSA began enrolling producers in DDAP III in late 2007. Then in early 2008 FSA temporarily halted sign up pending the completion of rulemaking. Based on public comments on the program elicited during this suspension, FSA made minor changes to the DDAP III rules.

To be eligible, a producer's operation must be in a county designated a major disaster or emergency area by the president or declared a natural disaster area by the secretary of agriculture between January 1, 2005 and December 31, 2007. Producers in contiguous counties are also eligible. Further eligibility is possible if an FSA Administrator's Physical Loss Notice was issued. For

further information, contact our office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov/ca



ACREAGE REPORTING

Don't forget to call for an appointment to certify all crops and the acreage of each field after finishing planting. The deadline for reporting fall-planted crops is **April 30, 2008**. The final reporting deadline for all spring-planted crops is **July 15, 2008**.

Crop and acreage reporting is required for many programs and it's a good way to maintain history. Certified acreage reports are used to determine compliance with certain farm programs and, perhaps, the eligibility level in future programs. Measurement service can be requested to determine exact acreage for reporting purposes. FSA is now using satellite information to measure crop acreages.

If you have not yet reported your 2008 plantings, call the office without delay to schedule an appointment by the deadlines!

COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION

Congratulations to Wayne Shingai! Wayne was elected to represent farmers and ranchers from within the Hollister city limits on the County Committee. This is Wayne Shingai's first term as a County Committee member. The election results for LAA#1 are:



Wayne Shingai, Elected to the COC
Maria Martinez, 1st 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!

2008 NEW FARM BILL?

Besides the weather, the main topic of conversation in the farming community is the farm bill. There seems to be more questions than answers now, but FSA is working towards turning the legislation into programs. No farm bill program will go unannounced. We will make every effort to notify you of signup dates, rules, and program options so you can make an informed choice. Watch for future newsletters and mailings from our office.

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NONINSURED CROP DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (NAP)

NAP can soften financial losses caused by natural disasters, but only if you've applied for coverage and paid the application fee in advance. NAP kicks in when natural disasters result in a catastrophic loss (more than 50%) of production or prevented planting (more than 35% of intended acreage) of an eligible crop. NAP coverage is available for crops for which FCIC insurance is not offered.



Eligible Crops

- Includes all types of crops that are not traditionally insurable, such as vegetables, hay, forage (native pasture), mushrooms, floriculture, & Christmas trees
- *If you are not sure whether a crop is insurable in our county, contact our office or a crop insurance agent*

Eligible Natural Disasters

- Unusual weather conditions such as drought, freeze, hail, excessive moisture
- Adverse natural occurrence such as earthquake or flood
- Must occur before or during harvest, be documented, and directly affect the crop

Eligible Producers

- Your gross revenue (and that of any individual or entity combined with you as one “person”) cannot exceed \$2 million
- You must file all eligibility forms including a Farm Operating Plan and Highly Erodible Land Conservation Certification

Applying for Coverage

- Service fees must be paid in advance by the sales closing date and are NOT REFUNDABLE even if you fail to later plant the crop or meet eligibility criteria
- Service fees are \$100 per crop per county, not to exceed \$300 per producer per county
- Each person with a share in the crop must purchase coverage for their own share
- Limited resource producers may request a waiver of service fees; ask us for the criteria

Annual Reporting Requirements for NAP

- Report all acres planted by the EARLIER OF: April 30 for hay/grain crops, July 15 for spring-seeded crops, or 15 days prior to the onset of harvest for all crops.
- Provide verifiable production records showing the quantity of all harvested production for all uses (including salvage) during the year no later than the acreage reporting date of the following year
- Your records must be verifiable and clearly show final, total net production or we may assign production or deny the claim
- *Failure to report acreage & production information may result in reduced or zero NAP assistance*

Approved Yields & Payments

- Your approved yield is the average of your annual production divided by your crop acreage for the last 4-10 years.
- *If you do not provide acreage & production records for at least 4 prior years, your approved yield may be substantially reduced.*
- Loss is determined by comparing your actual production for the year to your expected production (which is based on your approved yield). NAP covers the amount of loss that EXCEEDS 50% of your expected production.
- The NAP payment is calculated using your acres, approved yield, net production, 55% of an average market price established by FSA, & a reduction factor if the crop is unharvested or prevented from being planted

If a Natural Disaster Strikes

- You *must* file a Notice of Loss form CCC-576 within *15 calendar days* of the natural disaster or date damage became apparent
- You must request an appraisal if the damaged crop will be unharvested or used differently than intended & must leave all acres intact until the appraisal is completed & the acreage released
- *Late-filed notices of loss that do not allow onsite verification of the crop and the cause of loss will not be eligible*
- You must file an application for payment no later than the acreage reporting date of the following year.

For more information regarding NAP coverage, you can contact our FSA Office and ask for Jeannine at (831) 637-4360 Ext. 100.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
 Farm Service Agency
 San Benito/Santa Clara County FSA Office
 2337 Technology Pkwy., Suite A
 Hollister, CA. 95023

Dates to Remember	
April 30, 2008	Deadline to file acreage report for all fall-planted annuals
May 5, 2008	Dairy Disaster Assistance Program III Sign-up period ends
May 26, 2008	Memorial Day Holiday, FSA Offices Closed
July 4, 2008	Independence Day – Office Closed
July 15, 2008	Deadline to file acreage report for all spring-planted crops
Within 15 days of Disaster	File a NAP notice of loss if crop damage occurs
Today	Report changes to farming operation or bank account info.
Continues	CDP/LCP/LIP Sign-up

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.