

JUNE 2012



Santa Barbara/Ventura County FSA Updates

DEAR PRODUCERS: Welcome to the new GovDelivery bulletins and updates service from your Santa Barbara/Ventura County FSA office. Note that you are welcome to request to receive bulletins from more than one county and can add or remove individual subscriptions at any time.



Santa Barbara/Ventura County FSA Office

Address:

920 East Stowell Road
Santa Maria, CA, 93454

Phone: 805-928-9269 Ex.2

Fax: 805-928-9644

Hours: 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Ventura Office Hours:

1ST & 3RD Wednesday of the month

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

*Located at the USDA/RCD Building

3380 Somis Road
Somis, CA, 93066

Note: Make an appointment. We will cancel office hours if we don't have any scheduled appointments.

County Committee Nominations

The County Committee nomination period runs from June 15, 2012 through August 1, 2012. For detailed information contact your local FSA office. The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees is important to ALL farmers and ranchers. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

County committee members are a critical component of the operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers and ranchers who serve on county committees help with the decisions necessary to administer the programs in their counties. They work to ensure FSA agricultural programs serve the needs of local producers.

FSA county committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws. County committee members apply their judgment and knowledge to make local decisions.

Since this only happens once a year, here is an election refresher. For election purposes, counties are divided into local administrative areas, or LAAs. Each LAA contributes one producer to serve a three-year term on the Farm Service Agency county committee.

Each year, an election is held in an LAA to replace the committee member(s) whose three-year term is expiring. For 2012, two seats are up for election. Santa Barbara and Ventura County are divided into 5 LAAs.

This year, LAA 2 and LAA 4 are up for election.

| DISTRICT [#] COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTIONS | | |
|---|-----|--|
| COUNTY | LAA | TOWNSHIPS |
| SANTA BARBARA | 2 | MID SECTION OF THE COUNTY FROM SANTA MARIA TO THE SOUTH COAST TO CARPINTERIA |
| VENTURA | 4 | WEST SIDE OF VENTURA COUNTY FROM THE SANTA BARBARA COUNTY LINE TO LA COUNTY LINE |

County Executive Director:

Brenda Farias

Program Technicians:

Alex Hernandez

Daisy Lopez

Farm Loan Manager:

Gary Troester

Farm Loan Officer Trainee:

Victor Manuel Hernandez

Farm Loan Technician:

Tarry Hetzel

County Committee (COC)

Daniel Naumann, Chair

Kerry Brooks, Vice Chair

John Harvey, Member

Tom Thompson, Member

Ernesto Ramirez, Member

Glenna Berry-Horton, Minority
Advisor

**Adjusted Gross
Income**

USDA and the Internal Revenue Service have established an electronic information exchange process for verifying compliance with the adjusted gross income (AGI) provisions for farm programs. Written consent is required from each producer or payment recipient for the tax review process. No actual tax data will be included in the report that IRS sends to FSA. This ensures that payments are not issued to producers whose AGI exceeds certain limits. The limits set in the 2008 Farm Bill are \$500,000 nonfarm average AGI for commodity and disaster programs; \$750,000 farm average AGI for direct payments and; \$1 million nonfarm average AGI for conservation programs. Participants in CCC programs subject to average AGI rules must submit form CCC-931 to their local FSA County Office to avoid interruption of program benefits. This form may be obtained from local FSA and NRCS offices.

Crop Reporting

The annual, timely and accurate reporting of acres for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of benefits for a variety of Farm Service Agency programs. All cropland on the farm must be reported to receive benefits from the Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program, marketing assistance loans and Loan Deficiency Payments.

Conservation Reserve Program acreage must be reported to receive annual rental payments. Crop acreage for Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) also must be reported.

Crop reports — form FSA-578, Report of Acreage — must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. Producers need to file their acreage reports by July 15, 2012 or 15 days before harvest.

Prevented Planting:

Prevented planting needs to be reported no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date.

Failed Acreage:

Reports of failed acreage must be filed before disposition of the crop, and producers must be able to establish to the satisfaction of the county committee that the crop failed and was prevented from being replanted through the normal planting period because of natural disaster conditions.

**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 and applications for payment 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 verifiable according to agency specifications. NAP Losses must be reported within 15 days of loss.

Contact your FSA County Office for deadlines and more information.



Measurement Service

Farmers who would like a guarantee on their crop plantings and land use acreages can make it official by using the FSA measurement service. Producers must file a request with the county office staff and pay the cost of a field visit to have stake and referencing done on the farm. Measurement service is available using digital imagery. If an on-site visit is not required producers are charged a reduced rate. Incorrect acreage self-certification can result in reduced program payments, penalty or loss of eligibility. Producers can request ortho-imagery and CLU covering their land (commonly referred to as a clip) at no charge. This would provide the acreage of an entire field.



NAP Records

Production records for individual crops need to be filed at the FSA office to establish an approved NAP yield. If this is the first year you participated in NAP, you can provide production and acreage information from prior years to establish your yield. If you participated in NAP in previous years, you must report your production and acreage on a yearly basis to keep your yield up-to-date. Records submitted must be reliable or verifiable. Records need to show crop disposition. We recommend producers submit production records as soon as harvest is complete. **All production records must be submitted by the subsequent crop year's final acreage reporting date.**

NAP Loss Filing

The CCC-576, Notice of Loss, is used to report failed acreage and prevented planting and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. Timely filing a Notice of Loss is required for all crops including grasses. For losses on crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and crop insurance, you must file a CCC-576, Notice of Loss, in the FSA County Office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent. If filing for prevented planting, an acreage report and CCC-576 must be filed within 15 calendar days of the final planting date for the crop.

2013 NAP Application Closing Dates

Vegetable row crops: 08/01/2012

Fall planted seed crops: 08/01/2012

Value loss and controlled environment crops: 09/01/2012

Strawberries: 08/01/2012

Forage seed crops: 09/01/2012

Forage crops, intended use of FG

Hay (mechanically harvested)

Forage crops, intended use of GZ

Grazing: 12/01/2012

Honey: 12/01/2012

Fruit - nut tree crops: 12/15/2012

Friendly Reminders

NOTE: Remember that the Notice of Loss application (CCC-576) for NAP must be filed within 15 days of when the loss is apparent to you to be considered timely filed.

NOTE: Remember that you must turn in your production on a yearly basis at the end of harvest. This step is important to maintain your Actual Production History (APH), to calculate the level of crop loss and your potential payment. The deadline to turn in all production is July 15 of the subsequent crop year.

NOTE: Remember to file your acreage reports timely regardless of whether you insure your crop with FSA or not. Acreage reporting deadlines are the earlier of 15 days before harvest or by July 15 of the crop year.

Conservation Compliance (HEL & Wetland)

Producers intending to remove fence rows, convert woodlots to cropland, install new drainage, or improve or modify existing drainage, must notify the FSA and update Form AD-1026. FSA will notify NRCS and NRCS will make HEL and wetland technical determinations. Farmers with HEL determined soils are reminded of tillage, crop residue and rotation requirements per their conservation plan. Failure to obtain ADVANCE approval for any of these situations can result in the loss of eligibility and all federal payments.

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 a 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

The claims package will have detailed information about the eligibility and claims process.

Honey Nonrecourse Marketing Assistance Loan and Loan Deficiency Payment

Overview

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Act) reauthorizes nonrecourse marketing assistance loans (MALs) and loan deficiency payments (LDPs), for the 2008 - 2012 crop of honey. Nonrecourse MALs and LDPs are administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA), on behalf of the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC). Honey nonrecourse MALs provide eligible producers with interim financing on their production and facilitate the orderly distribution of loan-eligible honey throughout the year, and allows the producer to delay the sale of their honey until more favorable market conditions emerge. A producer may satisfy the loan obligation by delivering to CCC the quantity of honey pledged as collateral for full payment of the loan at maturity.

Farm Loan Programs

The Farm Service Agency is committed to providing family farmers with loans to meet their farm credit needs. Those producers who are having trouble getting credit for their farm or who regularly borrow from FSA, direct and guaranteed loans are currently available. Ask a lender about an FSA loan guarantee to help with a setback or if a lender has been reluctant to extend or renew a loan. Farm ownership loans or farm operating loans may be obtained as direct loans for a maximum of up to \$300,000. Guaranteed loans have a maximum limit of \$1,214,000. This makes the maximum combination of direct and guaranteed loan indebtedness \$1,514,000. The one-time loan origination fee charged on FSA guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans has increased from 1 percent to 1.5 percent of the guaranteed portion of the loan, for loans obligated after Oct. 1, 2011. To find out more about FSA loan programs, contact the county office staff.

Banking Changes? – Let FSA Know to Prevent Payment Delays

If you changed banks and did not notify FSA, your payment could be delayed. Because payments are electronically transferred into your bank account, changes to your account and routing numbers need to be shared with FSA immediately. Also on FSA loans, to continue to make timely payments, you need to notify the office if you close your account or if another financial institution purchases your bank. It is important to remember that changes in a producer's account be provided to the county office promptly to avoid possible delays. Changes can include the type of account, bank mergers, new routing number or account numbers. Your county FSA office can help you avoid these problems if you will contact them in advance of any banking changes.

Controlled Substances

Individuals convicted under federal or state law of any planting, cultivating, growing, producing, harvesting or storing a controlled substance are ineligible for program payments and benefits.

If convicted of one of these offenses, a current program participant shall be ineligible during that crop year and the four succeeding crop years for Direct and Counter-Cyclical payments, price support loans, loan deficiency payments, market loan gains, storage payments, farm facility loans, Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program payments or disaster payments.

Program participants convicted of any federal or state offense consisting of the distribution (trafficking) of a controlled substance shall, at the discretion of the court, be ineligible for any or all program payments and benefits:

§ For up to 5 years after the first conviction

§ For up to 10 years after the second conviction

§ Permanently for a third or subsequent conviction.

Program participants with a federal or state conviction for the possession of a controlled substance shall be ineligible, at the discretion of the court, for any or all program benefits as follows:

§ up to one year upon the first conviction

§ up to five years after a second or subsequent conviction.

Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFLP) allows producers of eligible commodities to obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities.

The new maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFLP is \$500,000. Participants are now required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with CCC providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent drying and handling equipment. New loan terms of 7, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan. Interest rates for each term rate may be different and are based on the rate which CCC borrows from the Treasury Department.

Payments are provided in the early partial disbursement and the remaining final disbursement. The partial disbursement will be available after a portion of the construction has been completed. The final fund disbursement will be made when all construction is completed. The maximum amount of the partial disbursement will be 50 percent of the projected and approved total loan amount.

Applications for FSFL must be submitted to the FSA county office that maintains the farm's records. An FSFL must be approved before any site preparation or construction can begin.

For more information about FSFL please visit your FSA county office or www.fsa.usda.gov.

Farm Loan Rates

| Loan Purpose | Loan Type | Terms | Rates | Maximum |
|----------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|-------------|
| Farm Ownership | Direct | Up to 40 yrs | 3.50% | \$300,000 |
| | Guranteed | By Lender | By Lender | \$1,214,000 |
| Operating | Direct | 1 to 7 yrs | 1.50% | \$300,000 |
| | Guranteed | By Lender | By Lender | \$1,214,000 |
| Emergency | Direct | 1 to 40 yrs | 3.75% | \$500,000 |

Special Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment to attend or participate in meetings or events sponsored by the Farm Service Agency. If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in one of our events, please call the FSA county office and we will be happy to make any needed arrangements.

Emergency Farm Loans Available - Disaster Declaration

The Secretary of Agriculture, Congress, or State Governor has declared major weather related disasters in the State of California, covering damages & losses for Primary Counties & Contiguous Counties.

| Date of Declaration | Designation Code | Disaster Description | Final Date to Apply |
|---------------------|------------------|---|---------------------|
| 06/19/2012 | S3255 | Freezing Temperatures High Winds Excessive Rain | 02/19/2013 |

To have qualifying losses, applicants must have suffered a severe physical or production loss directly related to the above cited disaster description. For more information contact the FSA farm loan team at (805) 928-9269 Ext. 2.

FSA STAFF



For more information on bulletin subjects or details regarding your GovDelivery subscription with the Santa Barbara/Ventura County FSA Office, contact Brenda Farias, County Executive Director at brenda.farias@ca.usda.gov or call at 805-928-9269 Ex.2. 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 20250-9410, 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).

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