



Solano-Napa County Farm Service News

Farm Service Agency
Solano-Napa County
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Hours
Monday - Friday
8:00 A – 4:30 P

County Committee
Craig Gnos, LAA 3
Linda Neal, LAA 1
Richard Hamilton, LAA 2

County Executive Director
Lynda Janne

Staff
Laura VanHoose
Bonita Nogales
Bob Currey
Jan Durante

For further details and to discuss your own operation's eligibility for any program, contact your nearest FSA local office.

For a list of local offices, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/ca

2009 FSA County Committee Elections

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees is important to ALL farmers and ranchers, whether beginning or long-established, with large or small operations. 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 make FSA agricultural programs serve the needs of local producers.

County committees provide local input on Commodity price support loans and payments, Conservation programs, Emergency programs, Payment eligibility.

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.

Election Schedule:

June 15, 2009 – The nomination period begins. Solano-Napa COC is currently accepting nominations in Local Administrative Area (LAA) 3.

(LAA 3 includes the northeast section of Solano county, east of Interstates 505 and 80 and north of Air Base Parkway and Hay Rd.)

Aug. 3, 2009 - Last day to file nomination forms (FSA-669A)

Nov. 6, 2009 - Ballots mailed to eligible voters

Dec. 7, 2009 - Last day to return voted ballots

Jan. 1, 2010 - Newly elected county committee members take office



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

- 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.

To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign nomination form FSA-669A. The form includes a statement that the nominee agrees to serve if elected. This form is available at USDA Service Centers and online at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA> under News & Events/County Committee Elections.

Nomination forms for the 2009 election must be post-marked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business on Aug. 3, 2009.

Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in an FSA program may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee. Individuals may nominate themselves or others as a candidate. Additionally, organizations representing minority and women farmers or ranchers may nominate candidates. Nomination forms are filed for the county committee of the office that administers a producer's farm records.

Agricultural producers of legal voting age may be eligible to 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 of an entire farm may also be eligible to vote. More information about voting eligibility requirements can be found in the FSA fact sheet titled "FSA County Committee Election - Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a County Committee Member." Contact the FSA office for more information.

ACRE Signup is Ongoing

The Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) is a new program authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill. The ACRE program signup began April 27, 2009, and runs through **August 14, 2009**. The ACRE alternative provides eligible producers a state-level revenue guarantee, based on the 5-year state Olympic average yield and the 2-year national average price.



July 15: deadline to report spring crops

Producers who elect the ACRE program for a farm agree to:

- forgo counter-cyclical payments;
- accept a 20-percent reduction of the direct payments; and
- accept a 30-percent reduction in loan rates for all commodities produced on the farm

Commodities eligible for ACRE payments are wheat, corn, grain sorghum, barley, oats, upland cotton, long grain rice, medium and short grain rice, peanuts, soybeans, sunflower seed, canola, flaxseed, safflower, mustard seed, rapeseed, sesame seed, crambe, dry peas, lentils, small chickpeas and large chickpeas.

Aug 1: last day to request farm changes for 09

The ACRE program was created to give producers an option in lieu of traditional counter-cyclical payments. Producers may elect and enroll in ACRE for the 2009 crop year even if they have already accepted advance direct payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program.



To elect ACRE for a farm, producers must complete Form CCC-509 ACRE, which irrevocably elects ACRE for the farm through crop year 2012. Form CCC-509, the contract to participate in ACRE, must then be completed each year the producer intends to participate and receive benefits.

DCP Signup Extended

Signup for the 2009 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment (DCP) Program has been extended until **August 14, 2009**. FSA will not accept any late-filed applications. **All required signatures must be on file.**

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. 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.

Pulse Crops

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 states that eligible pulse crop acres may be added as base acres. The addition of pulse crop base acres is:

- effective for 2009 through 2012 crop years
- required to be calculated in the same manner as eligible oilseed acreage under the 2002 Farm Bill.

The calculation of pulse crop base acres and yield is based on the acreage and yield history from the 1998 through 2001 crop years. Pulse crops are defined as:

- dry peas (green, yellow, Austrian, Umattilla, and wrinkled); intended uses must be Seed or Dry Edible.
- Lentils; any intended use.
- large chickpeas (Kabuli garbanzo beans); any intended use.
- small chickpeas (Desi garbanzo beans); any intended use.

Pulse crop base acres will only be eligible for counter-cyclical or Acreage Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) payments for 2009 through 2012 crop years. Direct payments will not be eligible.

Producers with current pulse crop acre history in 1998 through 2001 will be notified of the opportunity to update pulse crop base acres to their farm using one of three options. Producers must also provide verifiable and acceptable production evidence to support the calculated average farm yield for each pulse crop. **The deadline for pulse crop base acres and yield election is August 14, 2009.** Producers that did not file acreage reports on pulse crops in 1998 through 2001 may now provide a late-filed acreage report at no charge. Acceptable evidence of the existence and disposition of the crop is required. Late-file prevented planting provisions for 1998 thru 2001 pulse crops also apply.

Crop Acreage Reports

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 FSA programs. **All cropland on the farm must be reported to receive benefits from most programs, to include DCP/ACRE, marketing assistance loans and Loan Deficiency Payments.**

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage must be reported to receive annual rental payments. Also, crop acreage for Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) must be reported. Crop reports, (FSA-578, Report of Acreage) must account for all cropland on a farm, idle or planted.

Aug 3: final date to submit nomination for COC (LAA3)

Sodbuster Regulations

The term “sodbusting” is used to identify the plowing up of erosion-prone grasslands for use as cropland. Sodbuster violations are unauthorized tillage practices on highly erodible lands that converted native vegetation such as rangeland or woodland, to crop production after Dec. 23, 1985.

Farmers and ranchers should be aware that if they use highly erodible land for crop production without proper conservation measures, they risk losing eligibility to participate in Farm Service Agency programs.

Before producers clear, plow or otherwise prepare areas not presently under crop production for planting, they are required to file an AD-1026, indicating the area to be brought into production.

If Natural Resources Conservation Service indicates on a CPA-026 that the area will be highly erodible land, the producer will be required to develop and implement a conservation plan on the affected acreage, before bringing land into production.

In addition, producers and the producer’s affiliates have to file an AD-1026 in the administrative or control county office before any farm program payments can be made. The AD-1026 is the producer’s signed certification that HELC, as well as wetland conservation, provisions will not be violated.

Farm Loan Programs

The Farm Service Agency 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 \$1,094,000. 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 Begin-

ning Farmers and loans for socially disadvantaged applicants are also available through FSA.

For detail information on loan eligibility or the different available loan programs, call this office, or call the Stockton FSA office at 209-472-7127 to directly contact the farm loan team.

Down Payment Loan Program

FSA has a special loan program to assist socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers in purchasing a farm. Retiring farmers may use this program to transfer their land to future generations.

To qualify:

- The applicant must make a cash down payment of at least 5 percent of the purchase price.
- The maximum loan amount does not exceed 45 percent of the least of (a) the purchase price of the farm or ranch to be acquired; (b) the appraised value of the farm or ranch to be acquired; or (c) \$500,000 (Note: This results in a maximum loan amount of \$225,000).
- The term of the loan is 20 years. The interest rate is 4 percent below the direct Farm Ownership Loan rate, but not lower than 1.5 percent.
- The remaining balance may be obtained from a commercial lender or private party. FSA can provide up to a 95 percent guarantee if financing is obtained from a commercial lender. Participating lenders do not have to pay a guarantee fee.

For more information on Farm Loan Programs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

NOTICE TO ALL OWNERS AND TENANTS ELIGIBLE FOR FSA PAYMENTS:

The forms for 2009 are changed from previous years, so **anyone** requesting program benefits from this office must complete the required forms. Included are the Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) certification and the Highly Erodible/Wetland (HEL/WC) certification. Contact this office now to make an appointment to update your eligibility folder.



Aug 14: deadline to provide all signatures for DCP or ACRE contract



"Agriculture is the most healthful, most useful and most noble employment of man." George Washington



IMPORTANT DATES

JUL 15	Last day to timely file spring-seeded/perennial acreage reports
AUG 1	Last day to request farm reconstitution
AUG 3	Deadline to submit nomination for COC member, LAA 3
AUG 14	Deadline for 2009 DCP/ACRE enrollment

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