



Stanislaus - Tuolumne County News

**Stanislaus - Tuolumne
USDA Service Center**
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Suite E
Modesto, CA 95358
209-491-9320 (phone)
209-491-9331 (fax)
www.fsa.usda.gov/ca

Hours
Monday - Friday
8:00am - 4:30pm

Office Closed:
Thursday, November 26th
Friday, December 25th
Friday, January 1st, 2010

County Committee (COC)
Dave Santos, Chairman
Kurt Erickson, Vice Chair
Dave Wheeler, Member
Bob Brennan, Member
Polo Ramos, Advisor
Tina Nunes, Advisor
Dale Matney, 1st Alternate
Mary Blake, 1st Alternate

Next COC meeting:
Thursday, December 10th

Farm Program Staff
Jonna Spaletta, CED
Latisha Kahn, PT
Ashley Nichols, PT
Carmen Cardenas, PT
Maria Juárez, PT

Farm Loan Staff
Suzie Wilson, State Specialist
Joe Enos, Acting FLM
Alma Jaquez, PT
Lupe Mims, PT

Sign-Up Underway for 2008/2009 Livestock Forage Program

The Stanislaus/Tuolumne County FSA is currently scheduling appointments for the 2008 and 2009 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP). LFP provides assistance to eligible livestock producers that have suffered livestock grazing losses due to: drought or fire on federally managed land.

For drought, the losses must have occurred on land that is either native or improved pastureland with permanent vegetative cover or a crop planted specifically for grazing. The drought losses must also have occurred during the normal grazing period for the specific type of grazing land in the county.

Eligible livestock under LFP include: beef cattle, alpacas, buffalo, beefalo, dairy cattle, deer, elk, emus, equine, goats, llamas, poultry, reindeer, sheep and swine. The monthly payment rate will be an amount equal to 60 percent of the lesser of:

- the monthly feed cost for all covered livestock, using a feed grain equivalent (for example, the feed grain equivalent for an adult beef cow is 15.7 pounds of corn per day)
- the monthly feed cost calculated using the normal carrying capacity for the grazing land.

Eligible producers must have insured their grazing acres under FSA's Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) or paid the \$100 eligibility buy-in fee for 2008, which allowed producers who missed our NAP sign-up to be eligible for disaster programs. The Buy-In was conducted in the summer of 2008, for the 2008 crop year only. For 2009, producers must have purchased NAP coverage to be eligible. Any producer that did not purchase NAP or Buy-In is not eligible to participate.

Please call our office at 209-491-9320 ext. 2 as soon as possible to schedule an appointment, as the application closing date is rapidly approaching!

Sign-up deadlines are as follows:

For 2008	Apply by Dec 10, 2009
For 2009	Apply by Jan 30, 2010
For 2010 / 2011	Apply by Jan 30, 2011 / 2012

Please Note: If you are eligible to apply for both 2008/2009 LFP, the office will be completing both required applications and eligibility forms during your appointment.

Late filed LFP applications cannot be accepted!



Friendly Reminder to Purchase 2010 NAP/ CAT

If you would like the option of participating in future Disaster Assistance Programs, it is imperative that you either purchase Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage or at least catastrophic risk protection (CAT) level of crop insurance for all insurable crops; this is an eligibility requirement of the New Farm Bill. *NAP application closing dates can be found in the "Dates to Remember" table on page 4.*

2010 DCP & ACRE

Producers have until **June 1, 2010** to sign up for the 2010 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment Program (DCP) and/or the Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program. Producers will receive a postcard from the County office with an appointment date and time; however, you are welcome to call the office to schedule an appointment. ***If for any reason you cannot attend the scheduled appointment, please contact the FSA office to reschedule your appointment.***

USDA 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 2010, eligible producers may request to receive advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment. USDA will begin issuing advance direct payments Dec 1, 2009. Counter-cyclical payment rates vary depending on market prices. Counter-cyclical payments are issued only when the effective price for a commodity is below its target price. The effective price is the higher of the national average market price received during the 12-month marketing year for each covered commodity and the national average loan rate for a marketing assistance loan for the covered commodity.

The ACRE Option

The optional ACRE Program provides a safety net based on state revenue losses and acts in place of the price-based safety net of counter-cyclical payments under DCP. A farm's payment is based on a revenue guarantee calculated using a 5-year average state yield and the most recent 2-year national price for each eligible commodity. For 2010, the 2-year price average will be based on the 2008 and 2009 crop years.

An ACRE payment is issued when both the state and the farm have incurred a revenue loss. The payment is based on 83.3 percent (85 percent in 2012) of the farm's planted acres times the difference between the State ACRE guarantee and the state revenue times the ratio of the farm's yield divided by the state expected yield. The total number of planted acres for which a producer may receive ACRE payments may not exceed the total base on the farm.

In exchange for participating in ACRE, in addition to not receiving counter-cyclical payments, a farm's direct payment is reduced by 20 percent, and marketing assistance loan rates are reduced by 30 percent.

The decision to enroll in the ACRE Program is irrevocable. The owner of the farm and all producers on the farm must agree to enroll in ACRE. Once enrolled, the farm shall be enrolled for that initial crop year and will remain in ACRE through the 2012 crop year.

The June 1, 2010, deadline is mandatory for all participants. USDA will not accept any late-filed applications.

Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) Program Changes

The Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program 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 FSFL 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. 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.

Early 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. The following commodities are eligible for farm storage facility loans:

- Corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley or minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain
- Corn, grain sorghum, wheat, oats or barley harvested as other-than-whole grain
- Pulse crops - lentils, small chickpeas and dry peas
- Hay
- Renewable biomass
- Fruits (including nuts) and vegetables
- cold storage facilities

Please Note: The intent of the program is to provide on-farm storage to producers for the storage of the eligible agricultural commodities produced by the borrower.

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

Loans for the Socially Disadvantaged

A socially disadvantaged applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities.

For purposes of this program, socially disadvantaged groups are: women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders.

If producers or their spouses believe they would qualify as socially disadvantaged, they should contact their local FSA office for details. FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

Biomass Crop Assistance Program

The new Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) is of interest to biomass conversion facilities and those who own, chip and transport biomass material to these facilities.

Chippers and producers with conversion facilities contracts to prepare and deliver materials can apply for matching payments under the collection, harvest, storage and transportation (CHST) component of BCAP. Once an agreement is signed between FSA and a biomass conversion facility and funding is provided, the facilities can begin accepting materials under this program.

The matching CHST payments are paid at a rate of \$1 for \$1 per dry-ton equivalent received by a qualified biomass conversion facility, not to exceed \$45 per dry-ton equivalent. A biomass owner is eligible to receive payments for two years. The purpose of the matching payments is to assist biomass handlers with the CHST cost of delivering biomass to a qualified biomass conversion facility. Once a facility becomes qualified, eligible material owners or producers who deliver biomass to that facility may be eligible to receive CHST payments.

Eligible material owners or producers, who market eligible material to a qualified biomass conversion facility, may apply for the matching CHST payment at their FSA county office. An application must be submitted and approved before the eligible material is sold or delivered to a qualified biomass conversion facility. After the product is delivered, a material handler must provide FSA with documentation of product quantity, quality and payment rate. County offices will validate payment requests with information in the county office and information provided under the terms of MOUs with the qualified biomass conversion facilities. CHST payments will not be authorized until appropriate environmental analysis is completed. Contact your FSA state office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov for more information.

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees and Farm-Raised Fish

ELAP provides compensation to eligible producers of livestock, honey bees, and farm-raised fish for losses due to disease, adverse weather, or other loss conditions, including losses due to blizzards and wildfires caused by natural occurrence (for example, lightning.) ELAP is for losses that are not covered by LIP, LFP, or SURE.

Physical losses of honey bees and honey bee hives lost due to adverse weather or natural occurrence (such as colony collapse) are eligible under ELAP. Producers will be required to provide documentation of beginning and ending inventory of honey bee colonies when claiming a physical loss of honey bees or honey bee hives. Physical losses will be compensated at 60 percent of the actual replacement cost of the honey bees or honey bee hives.

For losses in calendar year 2008, producers must provide a notice of loss and application for payment in their administrative county office **no later than December 10, 2009**. Application for payment for calendar year 2009 losses shall be filed no later than January 30, 2010.

Vote for County Committee!

Ballots for this year's county committee election were mailed to eligible voters on November 6, 2009. Voters must complete their ballots and return them to the Farm Service Agency county office by the close of business on **December 7, 2009**. If mailed, ballots must be post-marked by midnight December 7, 2009.

This year, we are electing two Local Administrative Areas (LAA's); LAA #2 which covers central Stanislaus County and LAA #4 which covers Tuolumne County. The candidates are as follows:

LAA #2:

- **David Wheeler** – Current COC Member and fourth generation farmer who produces hay, tree and row crops throughout San Joaquin, Stanislaus & Merced Counties and is active in his community through such activities as being a Volunteer Fireman.
- **David Absher** – Producer of hay and cattle whose operation spans San Joaquin, Contra Costa, Alameda, Stanislaus, Merced & Mariposa Counties and is also a Board Member of both San Joaquin-Stanislaus Cattlemen's Association and East-Side Stanislaus Farm Bureau.

LAA #4:

- **Mary Blake** – Current COC Alternate who runs cattle in Tuolumne County and is an active Member of the Sonora High Ag Boosters, Member of Tuolumne County Farm Bureau, and past 4-H Leader and California CattleWomen's Member.
- **Stuart Crook** – Runs cattle in Tuolumne County and is a Director of Tuolumne County Farm Bureau.

Applications for FSA Farm Loan Assistance

Farmers and ranchers that intend to apply to the Farm Service Agency for loan assistance for the upcoming crop year are encouraged to file their applications as early as possible. Filing early will help ensure that your loan is processed and approved as early as possible so that planting decisions can be made. Failure to apply early can result in a delay in processing loans due to the volume of applications that must be processed in date order. Contact your local FSA Farm Loan Staff for more details and assistance in applying.

Operating Loan Applications Needed Now!

Farmers that plan to apply to the FSA for annual operating loan assistance this year are encouraged to apply as soon as possible. The earlier an application for loan assistance is filed, the quicker the FSA staff can process your request. In addition, due to budget constraints, farmers that wait until later in the year to apply, run the risk of finding out that our funding allocations have been utilized already. Farmers should contact their FSA Farm Loan Staff for information as to what is required in order to have a complete loan application on file. Decisions on loans can not be made until a complete application is received.



Supplemental Disaster Assistance Programs

The 2008 Farm Bill amended the Trade Act of 1974 to create five new disaster programs, collectively referred to as Supplemental Agriculture Disaster Assistance programs. These programs include:

- Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP)
- Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP)
- Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)
- Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE)
- Tree Assistance Program (TAP)

To be eligible for these programs, producers must purchase at least catastrophic risk protection (CAT) level of crop insurance for all insurable crops and/or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for non-insurable crops under SURE, TAP, and ELAP.

In the 2008 Farm Bill; in general, the term "farm" means the sum of all crop acreage in all counties that is planted or intended to be planted for harvest by the eligible producer.

Dates to Remember	
Dec 1st	Application Closing Date for 2010 NAP coverage on Forage Crops (hay & grazing) and Honey
Dec 7th	Last day to submit or postmark COC Ballots
Dec 10th	Deadline to Apply for 2008 LFP and ELAP
Dec 15th	Application Closing Date for 2010 NAP coverage on Fruit & Nut Tree Crops (cherries, kiwi, olives, pears, persimmon, pistachios, pomegranates, strawberries, grapes)
Jan 30th	Deadline to apply for 2009 LFP and ELAP
April 30th	Final day to report fall/ winter planted crops (oats, wheat, etc)
Continuous	MILC Program FSFL Program Farm Loans

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