

June 2009



# Tulare County FSA News

## County Committee Elections FSA Counts on You

Since COC elections happen only once a year, here is an election refresher. For election purposes, counties are divided into local administrative areas, or LAAs. Each LAA selects 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 whose three-year term is expiring. In counties with three LAAs, one seat is up for election. In combined counties in some years, two seats may be up for election.

### Nominations

Candidate nominations for the FSA county committee election will be accepted June 15 through Aug. 3, 2009.

Producers who are residents in the LAA holding the election and who participate or cooperate in an FSA program and are of legal voting age may be nominated to serve on the county committee.

Individuals may nominate themselves or others as candidates. Also, organizations representing socially disadvantaged minorities and women farmers or ranchers may also nominate candidates.

The nomination form, FSA-669A, is available at the county office or may be downloaded from <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=newsroom&subject=landing&topic=cce>.

To be valid, the nomination form must be signed by the person being nominated, indicating agreement to serve if elected. The completed nomination form must be returned to the county office by the close of business on Aug. 3, or postmarked by midnight Aug. 3, 2009.

### Voting

Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Nov. 6, and must be returned to the county office by the close of business on Dec. 7, or postmarked by midnight Dec. 7, 2009.

Agricultural producers of legal voting age can 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 on an entire farm can also vote. No one can be denied the right to vote because of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation or marital or family status.

### Candidate Eligibility

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 felony
- Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services.

For additional clarification about county committee elections, contact your local county office staff. **LAA 3 is up for election this year in Tulare County.**

### **Tulare County USDA Service Center**

3530 W. Orchard Ct  
Visalia, CA 93277  
559-734-8732 Ext. 2 ph  
559-732-2805 fax

### Hours

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

### County Committee

#### **Chairperson**

Charlie Pitigliano, Jr.

#### **Vice-Chairperson**

Tom Gruber

#### **Member**

Mark Heuer

#### **Advisor**

Robert Sepeda,

### County Executive Director

Kaye Rydberg

### Farm Loan Manager

Bob Pearson

### County Office Staff

Becky Garcia, CPT  
Theresa Barajas, PT  
Slade Childers, FL PT  
Danny Jackson, FLO  
Mitzi Lankford, PT  
Yvonne Newman, PT  
Danielle Parreira, PT  
Kelly Solis, PT  
Lorraine Wilson, PT

Ave 184

Tipton	Rd 168
Pixley	

Ave 96	Rd 176	Terra Bella
Earlimart		Ducor
Alpaugh		

**LAA 3**

## **DCP & ACRE Signup Deadline**

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. Signup in the ACRE option is also available through August 14, 2009.

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 prices fall below a threshold level.

The electronic DCP (or eDCP) service will save you time, reduce paperwork and speed up contract processing at FSA offices. It is available to anyone eligible to participate in the DCP Program. To access this on-line service, you must have an active USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account, which requires filling out an online registration form at <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov> followed by a visit to the local USDA Service Center for identity verification.

## **Crop Reporting**

The annual requirement of reporting to the FSA office can be referred to as crop reporting, acreage reporting, or crop certification. Filing an accurate and timely report 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.

The certification form FSA-578, Report of Acreage, must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. The producer certification deadline is July 15, 2009.

### **CRP & NAP Certification**

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

### **Prevented Planting:**

Prevented planting is 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.

## **Banking Changes?**

Almost all Farm Service Agency payments are made electronically using Direct Deposit. This innovation has cut down on the number of missing and late payments and reduced the time required to move funds. It has been calculated that having a problem with a payment is 20 times greater with checks than with Direct Deposit. Another benefit is that Direct Deposit to your account can be made within 48 hours.

To keep the system running smoothly, it's critical to keep the county office staff up to date on changes you might make in your financial institutions.

If you have changed accounts or institutions that might affect the direct deposit of your FSA payments, contact the FSA county office so we can update our files to insure continued uninterrupted service.

## **FSA Youth Loans**

The U.S Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) makes operating loans to individual youths age 10 through 20 to establish and operate income producing projects. These projects must be of modest size and be initiated, developed, carried out by youths participating in 4-H Clubs, FFA, or a similar organization or with a vocational teacher or county extension agent. The project must be an organized and supervised program of work. It must be planned and operated with the assistance of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan, and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. Contact the office for more details.

## **Direct and Guaranteed Loans**

The farm Service Agency is committed to providing family farmers with loans to meet their farm credit needs. If you are having trouble getting the credit you need for your farm, or regularly borrow from FSA, direct and guaranteed loans are available now.

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Ask your lender about an FSA loan guarantee if you've had a setback and your lender is reluctant to extend or renew your loan.

Loan funds can be limited. Producers are encouraged to apply early so that a loan can be processed and funded in a timely manner.

Most of our loan programs have special funding available for minority, female and beginning farmers. FSA Farm Loan employees will help you complete the necessary application and other forms, and help you understand what information is required, where to find it or who to contact to get it. To find out more about FSA Loan programs, contact the county office.

## LDP's and MAL's

Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs) are made to producers who, although eligible to obtain a marketing assistance loan agree to forgo the loan in return for a payment on an eligible commodity. By completing and agreeing to the terms & conditions on CCC-633EZ page 1 BEFORE losing "Beneficial Interest" (BI), producers indicate their intentions to receive LDP benefits. This one page covers all counties and all eligible harvested commodities for the entire year for the farming operation identified on the form. Producers must sign & submit this form to FSA before BI in the crop is lost. Once CCC-633EZ Page 1 has been signed & submitted, the producer can submit an LDP request by completing the applicable page(s) 2 through 5 at any time during the loan availability period. Eligible commodities and final loan availability dates are:

Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) are commodity loans available to producers who share in the risk of producing a crop. To be eligible you must maintain beneficial interest in the crop through the time of application. Beneficial interest means retaining the ability to make decisions about the commodity; responsibility for loss or damage to the commodity; and title to the commodity.

There are other MAL eligibility requirements and producers do not have to participate in DCP to be eligible for MAL's. Please contact this office if interested in this program.

Commodity	Final Loan Availability Date	
	For 2008 Crops	For 2009 Crops
Wool, mohair, unshorn pelts	January 31, 2009	January 31, 2010
Wheat, honey, barley, canola, oats, crambe, flaxseed, rape-seed, sesame	March 31, 2009	March 31, 2010
Cotton, corn, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard, safflower, sunflower seed	May 31, 2009	May 31, 2010

## Non-Insured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

### **Producers Responsibilities To Be Eligible For The Non-Insured Assistance program**

To be eligible for Nap payments, producers shall timely:

- File and pay the application for coverage service fee on or before sales closing date established for that crop.
- File an acreage report and provide verifiable production records for all crops which an application for coverage has been submitted by deadline dates set for that crop with your administrative county FSA Office. You must report your acreage and production on a yearly basis to keep your yield up-to-date. All production records must be submitted by the subsequent crop year's final acreage reporting date.
- Acreage reporting dates are—Fall crops April 30th; Spring crops and permanent crops July 15; Honey—A producer sharing in the unit must accurately report, in the recording County office by January 2 of the same calendar year or crop year ending December 31, the total number of the unit's colonies present in all counties.
- Complete all eligibility and supporting documentation forms
- If a natural disaster occurs file a notice of loss within 15 days with your administrative county office from the date the disaster occurred or 15 days from the date that the disaster is apparent or from normal harvest date.
- Notify your FSA county office if you will not be harvesting your crop so that an appraisal of the crop can be done.
- If you fail to comply with any of the above you may be ineligible for Nap benefits.



## Farm Reconstitutions

For FSA program purposes, tracts having the same owner and the same operator are grouped under one farm serial number. When changes in ownership or operation take place, a farm reconstitution is necessary.

The reconstitution—or recon—is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. Remember, to be effective for the current year, recons must be requested by August 1 for farms enrolled in specific programs.

Contact your FSA office to discuss the various methods of Reconstitution including: the Estate Method, the Designation of Landowner Method, the DCP Cropland Method and the Default Method.

Dates to Remember	
June 15, 2009	COC Nomination Period Opens
July 15, 2009	Acreage Reporting Deadline
August 1, 2009	Farm Reconstitutions Deadline
Aug. 3, 2009	Deadline to file COC Nomination
Aug. 14, 2009	DCP / ACRE Signup Deadline

Selected Interest Rates for June 2009	
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	2.25%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	4.25%
Farm Ownership Loans —Down Payment	1.50%
Emergency Loans	3.75%

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