

May 2013



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Tulare County FSA Updates

Tulare County FSA Office **2013 FSA County Committee Elections**

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Visalia, CA 93277

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County Committee

Chairperson
Mark Heuer
Vice-Chairperson
Craig Ainley
Member
Alex Garcia
Advisor
Robert Sepeda

County Office Staff

Theresa Barajas, PT
Slade Childers, FL PT
Ruth Ford, COT
Becky Garcia, CPT
Pat Miller, FLO
Yvonne Newman, PT
Danielle Parreira, PT
Kelly Solis, PT
Lorraine Wilson, PT

Farm Loan Manager

Tom Roberts

County Executive Director

Kaye Rydberg

Dates To Remember

The election of agricultural producers to the Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees is important to all farmers and ranchers, whether beginning or long-established, large or small operation. 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.

County Committee (COC) members are a critical component of FSA operations. 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.

Election Period

June 17, 2013 – The nomination period begins.

Aug. 1, 2013 – This is the last day to file nomination forms (FSA-669A) at our office.

Nov. 4, 2013 – Ballots mailed to eligible voters in LAA 2

Dec. 2, 2013 – Last day to return completed ballots to our office.

Jan. 1, 2014 – Newly elected county committee members take office.

Who Can Hold 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 local administrative area (LAA) in which the person is a candidate. (LAA 2 for the 2013 election)

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

May 27
Memorial Day - Office Closed

June 3
ACRE sign-up ends

June 7
2011 SURE sign-up ends

June 17
COC nomination period opens

- Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services.

Nominations

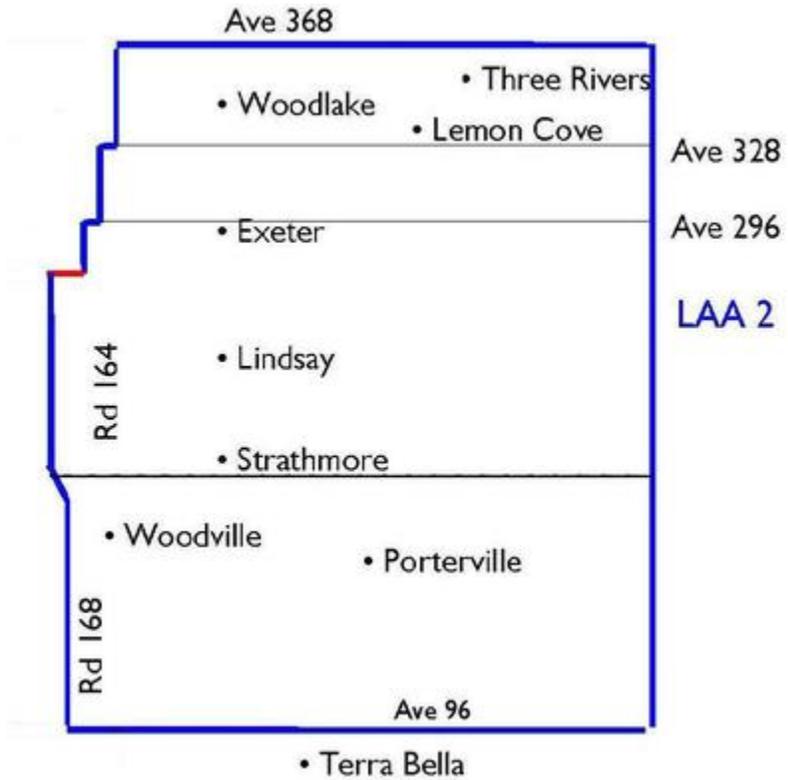
To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign nomination form FSA-669A. The form includes a statement that the nominee agrees to serve if elected. This form is available at our office and [online](#).

Who Can Vote

Agricultural producers of legal voting age within LAA 2 (see map below) 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 also may be eligible to vote. Contact our office if you would like more information.

Hay Net

Producers are encouraged to use Hay Net on the FSA website (<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet>). This online service allows producers with hay and those who need hay to post ads so they can make connections. Hay Net is a popular site for farmers and ranchers who have an emergency need. Individual ads can be posted free of charge by producers who complete a simple online registration form the first time they use the site.



Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Compliance



Landowners and operators are reminded that in order to receive payments from USDA, they must be compliant with Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions. Farmers with HEL determined soils must apply tillage, crop residue and rotation requirements as specified in their conservation plan.

Producers should notify FSA prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to ensure compliance. If you intend to clear any trees to create new cropland, these areas will need to be reviewed to ensure any work will not jeopardize your eligibility for benefits.

Landowners and operators can complete form AD-1026 Highly Erodible Land



Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification to determine whether a referral to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is necessary. For more information on Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation provisions, contact our office or visit the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov.

Beginning and Limited Resource Farmers

FSA assists beginning farmers and or members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's median size.

Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at our office. You may also visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

Loans for the Socially Disadvantaged

FSA has farm operating loans as well as loans to purchase or improve farms or ranches to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production.

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, FSA has reserved a portion of the funding for members of socially disadvantaged applicants.

A socially disadvantaged applicant is a person who is a member of a group that has been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice without regard to the members' individual qualities.

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

FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

**Selected Interest Rates for
May 2013**

Farm Operating Loans — Direct	1.375%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	3.500%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.500%
Emergency Loans	2.375%

DCP/ACRE Sign-Up Continues

The sign-up period for DCP and ACRE are still open. Producers are encouraged to sign up for DCP before the Aug. 2, 2013, deadline. The deadline for sign up is even earlier for ACRE, on June 3, 2013.

The 2013 DCP and ACRE program provisions are unchanged from 2012, except that all eligible participants in 2013 may choose to enroll in either DCP or ACRE for the 2013 crop year. This means that eligible producers who were enrolled in ACRE in 2012 may elect to enroll in DCP in 2013 or may re-enroll in ACRE in 2013. Likewise producers who were enrolled in DCP may opt for ACRE enrollment.

[Read more about DCP and ACRE](#) or contact our office for more information. To make an appointment to sign-up please give us a call.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).