

May 2014

USDA e-News

California Edition



United States Department of Agriculture

Welcome to USDA e-News, California Edition, a multi-agency newsletter providing California's producers and other interested parties with current information.

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Drought Resources

With California in its worst drought in the state's 160 years of record-keeping, USDA is working with federal and state partners to provide a collaborative response. For the most complete and up-to-date information on available resources, please visit the USDA Drought Resource webpage at <http://www.usda.gov/drought> and the California Department of Food and Agriculture Drought Resource webpage at <http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/drought>.

Farm Service Agency Offers Several Disaster Assistance Programs

Farm Service Agency (FSA) has a variety of programs available to help farmers and ranchers impacted by disasters, including the state's drought. The sign-up for all the Livestock Disaster Programs started on **April 15, 2014**. Click on the programs below for additional details, or visit the FSA Disaster Assistance Program Complete details on FSA Disaster Assistance can be found at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=diap&topic=landing>.

- [Livestock Forage Disaster Program \(LFP\)](#) provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who have suffered grazing losses due to drought or fire with retroactive authority to cover eligible losses back to Oct. 1, 2011. **Sign-up began on April 15, 2014.**
- [Livestock Indemnity Payments \(LIP\)](#) provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who have suffered livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law, including wolves and avian predators with retroactive authority to cover eligible livestock losses back to Oct. 1, 2011. **Sign-up began on April 15, 2014.**

- [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish \(ELAP\)](#) provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish for losses not covered by LFP and LIP. **Sign-up began on April 15, 2014.**
- [Tree Assistance Program \(TAP\)](#) provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines damaged by natural disasters with retroactive authority to cover eligible losses back to Oct. 1, 2011. **Sign-up began on April 15, 2014.**
- [Farm Storage Facility Loan Program \(FSFL\)](#) provides low-interest financing for producers to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities. The program was enhanced to include 23 new categories of eligible equipment for fruit and vegetable producers, and makes it easier for farmers and ranchers around the country to finance the equipment they need to grow and expand. The maximum loan amount is \$500,000.

NRCS Offers California Air Quality Chipping Initiative

The California Air Quality Chipping Initiative, through NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), will assist agricultural producers in chipping woody debris from removed orchards or vineyards that are no longer being irrigated due to the extreme drought conditions. These crops are located in areas where surface water deliveries are severely curtailed or suspended and no other sources of water are available for continued irrigation. Farmers in Fresno, Kings, Kern, Madera, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Tulare counties have until **June 20, 2014** to apply. For additional information, eligible farmers are encouraged to contact their local NRCS Service Center. Service center locations can be found at <http://www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov/>.

NRCS Conservation Drought Assistance to California Farmers & Ranchers

California has seen many droughts come and go, but 2014 is creating especially dire conditions for the State's farmers and ranchers. Information on [NRCS Drought Assistance](#) can be found at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/ca/newsroom/features/>.

Drought Assistance from Rural Development

Rural Development has several programs that may help rural communities, businesses, ag producers, farm workers and others impacted by California's ongoing drought. Opportunities include \$3 million in Emergency Community Water Assistance Grants (ECWAG) to help rural communities whose water supply is at risk. Additional help is available for homeowners that need help drilling a well or connecting to a community water system, food banks that anticipate increased demand, ag producers wanting to offset ag irrigation costs, and others. For a list of available programs, and local contacts, visit Rural Development's website <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ca>.

Updates

Farm Loan Program changes in the 2014 Farm Bill

The 2014 Farm Bill, enacted February 7, 2014, made several revisions to the implementation of FSA's Farm Loan Programs. These changes include:

1. Joint Financing Farm Ownership loans. The interest rate for joint financing Farm Ownership loans has changed. The new rate is either 2.5% or the regular Farm Ownership rate minus 2%, whichever is greater.
2. Farm Ownership down payment loans. The maximum amount for a Farm Ownership down payment loan has increased from \$225,000 to \$300,000. The actual loan made will depend on the circumstances of the transaction.
3. Youth Loans. FSA will now be able to make youth loans to Future Farmers of America and 4-H participants, even in non-rural areas.
4. Guaranteed Loans. Guaranteed Loan applicants are now limited to no more than 15 years of financing through FSA's direct and/or guaranteed operating loan programs.

Information on all of these programs can be found by visiting [Managing Credit Needs](#).

Sales Closing Dates Near for Crop Insurance Programs

USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) reminds producers that the sales closing dates for summer crop insurance programs are almost here. Producers should make sure to sign up, review, or change their crop policy before the date has passed. The last day to buy or change a policy for summer planted Potatoes in San Joaquin County is **May 31, 2014**. Producers are encouraged to contact a crop insurance agent as soon as possible or you can find an agent on the RMA website at <http://www.rma.usda.gov/tools/agent.html>.

California Kiwifruit Grower Referendum

California kiwifruit growers will be provided the opportunity to vote on whether to continue their federal marketing order from **May 15-30, 2014**, via mail balloting. A continuance referendum is required every six years. Growers who have produced kiwifruit in California from August 1, 2012 through July 31, 2013, are eligible to vote. USDA would consider continuing the marketing order if more than 50 percent of the growers, or growers representing more than 50 percent of the volume of California kiwifruit in the referendum, vote in favor of continuance. Notice of the referendum was published in the April 9, 2014 Federal Register. The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) will mail ballots and voting instructions to all kiwifruit growers of record. Eligible growers who do not receive a ballot may contact Kathie Notoro by mail, at USDA, AMS, 2202 Monterey Street, Suite 102B, Fresno, CA 93721-3129; email at Kathie.Notoro@ams.usda.gov; phone at (559)487-5901 or Fax (559)487-5906.

Final Census Data Arrives May 2

On May 2, USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will publish the 2012 Census of Agriculture full report. Join NASS on **May 2, 9:00 a.m. PCT** for a live national webcast of the final Census data release. During the webcast, you will learn about the latest Census data at the national, state and county levels on a range of topics, including value of production, marketing practices, on-farm conservation, demographics, organic production, as well as traditional and specialty crops down to the county level. If you miss the event, it will be posted online along with a number of other materials that highlight the results. Visit www.agcensus.usda.gov for event log-in information. If you have any questions regarding the Census data or tools, please contact the NASS Pacific Regional Office at 916-498-5161.

Funding Opportunities

NRCS sets deadline for 2014 Wetland Reserve Easement

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in California has set **May 15, 2014**, as the deadline for considering projects for 2014 Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE) funding through the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). As part of WRE, California NRCS is offering a wetlands grazing option in three geographic areas. This option allows participants with an approved wetlands conservation and grazing management plan to enroll grazed land as part of their WRE. The wetlands grazing options is available in the following areas: 1) California coastal pastures & wetlands of the north coast; 2) Central Valley vernal pools; and 3) intermountain wetlands of northeastern California. For additional information, eligible farmers are encouraged to contact their local NRCS Service Center. Service center locations can be found at <http://www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov>.

NRCS Accepting Applications for Funding Forest Health

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is accepting applications for funding offered through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to provide financial and technical assistance to eligible participants who want to improve forest health along the middle Klamath River in Northern California and private forestlands in San Bernardino and Riverside counties in Southern California. The signup deadline is **May 16, 2014**. This funding opportunity is part of a multi-year partnership between NRCS and the U.S. Forest Service to improve the health and resiliency of forest ecosystems where public and private lands meet across the nation. For additional information, eligible farmers are encouraged to contact their local NRCS Service Center. Service center locations can be found at <http://www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov>.

Rural Development Funds Support Local and Regional Food Systems

USDA Rural Development is accepting applications from farmers, ranchers and rural business owners for loan guarantees to support local and regional food production. The loan guarantees are available through the [Business & Industry Guaranteed Loan Program](#). The 2014 Farm Bill authorized a 5% set aside of funds for local and regional food projects. More information is available in the April 30, 2014 [Federal Register](#). Questions may also be directed to Larry Strong at larry.strong@ca.usda.gov or 530-885-6505 ext.114.

Native American Tribes Encouraged to Apply for Grant Promoting Economic Conditions

USDA Rural Development announced they will be accepting applications **on May 2, 2014** for the [Rural Business Opportunity Grant \(RBOG\)](#) Program for Native American tribes in rural areas. Grants up to \$100,000 are available to help support business incubators, feasibility studies and business plans, long-term strategic business planning, leadership and entrepreneurial training and other related activities. Additional details will be available soon. For more information visit the website: http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_RBOG.html or contact Karen Firestein at karen.firestein@ca.usda.gov or 530-792-5829.

Reports and Publications

NASS Reports

- [Almond Subjective Forecast](#) (05/01/2014)
- [Raisin Grape Overhead Trellis Report](#) (05/05/2014)
- [Crop Production](#) (05/09/2014)
- [Fruit & Nut Review](#) (05/15/2014)
- [Field Crop Review](#) (05/15/2014)
- [Processing Tomato Report](#) (05/22/2014)
- [Walnut Acreage Report](#) (05/22/2014)
- [Poultry Report](#) (05/30/2014)

Other Activities & Events

USDA Webinar Series for the Fruit and Vegetable Industry

The [Agricultural Marketing Service's Fruit and Vegetable Program](#) invites you to take part in a series of free, interactive webinars on our many programs and services. At each webinar, you'll hear a presentation from a USDA expert on a specific topic, be introduced to our staff, and take part in an interactive question and answer session. These informative webinars are designed for fruit and vegetable growers, packers, shippers, processors, wholesalers, and retailers of all sizes. Registration is required and space is limited. Log on today to register – it's your first step to learning how we can work together to meet your unique business needs. If you miss a webinar, just visit our [Webinar Archive](#) to watch it online. If you have any question about our webinar series or USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, please contact Christopher Purdy at (202) 720-3209 or christopher.purdy@ams.usda.gov.

Upcoming Webinars:

USDA Fresh Produce Inspection 101	May 22, 2014 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time	To register. http://bit.ly/1kUdwi2
An Introduction to the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA) *	June 26, 2014 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time	To register. http://bit.ly/1b1QnJZ

About Us

Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)

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Farm Service Agency (FSA)

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Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

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Risk Management Agency (RMA)

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Contact Us

If you would like to receive a copy of future newsletters or if you have relevant information for California producers that you want to include in a future issue of this newsletter, please email one of the contacts listed below. Please be advised that not all activities may be published.

Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)

Rose Aguayo, Assistant Regional Director
559-487-5901
Rose.Aguayo@ams.usda.gov

Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Val Dolcini, State Executive Director
530-792-5520
Val.Dolcini@ca.usda.gov

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Luana Kiger, Special Assistant
530-792-5661
Luana.Kiger@ca.usda.gov

Reina Rogers, American Indian Liaison
530-283-7513
Reina.Rogers@ca.usda.gov

National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)

Kelly Krug, Deputy Director
916-498-5161 Ext 106
Kelly.Krug@nass.usda.gov

Risk Management Agency (RMA)

Sandy Sanchez, Deputy Director

530-792-5870

Sandy.Sanchez@rma.usda.gov

Rural Development (RD)

Karen Firestein, Business & Cooperative Programs Specialist

530-792-5829

Karen.Firestein@ca.usda.gov

Janice Waddell, Native American Coordinator

530-792-5810

Janice.Waddell@ca.usda.gov

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