

June/July 2007

Newsletter 3

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FSA: www.fsa.usda.gov
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Farm Bill:
www.usda.gov.farmbill

Hours:

Monday-Friday
8:00 AM-4:30 PM

County Committee:

Susan Harter
Richard Manassero
Terry Munz
Patricia Van Dam

Advisor:

Bennie Moore, Jr.

**County Executive
Director:**

Douglas Brand

Staff:

Marilynn Wells, PT
Holleen Self, PT

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Los Angeles-Orange-San Bernardino Counties

FSA NEWS

NEW DISASTER PROGRAMS

As part of new legislation passed by Congress in May, a multi-program package to help farmers who have suffered losses over the past three years will soon be available.

Specific details are not yet available. As more information becomes available we will provide updates, and information will soon be available online at: www.fsa.usda.gov. We anticipate that sign up will occur later this fall. A few program specifics are:

Crop Disaster Program:

All crops are eligible. However, producers must have purchased crop insurance or coverage under the agency's Non-insured Crop Assistance Program (NAP) in order to qualify. Eligible losses are those that exceeded 35 percent and occurred in 2005, 2006 or 2007 (2007 crops must have been planted before Feb. 28, 2007) as a result of a natural disaster. The producer will choose one year for benefits.

Livestock Programs:

Producers choose for each livestock program one of three years for which they would receive benefits. Many California counties are eligible. For a complete list of eligible counties by year, visit www.fsa.usda.gov and select California from the state office menu at the top of the page.

The Livestock Compensation Program provides benefits for producers in designated disaster counties for their added costs of procuring livestock feed in 2005, 2006 or 2007 (up to Feb. 28, 2007). Eligible livestock are: dairy cattle, beef cattle, buffalo, beefalo, equine, poultry, elk, reindeer, sheep, goats, swine, deer, and catfish.

The Livestock Indemnity Program makes payment available to producers that have incurred more than normal livestock losses between Jan.1, 2005 and Feb. 28, 2007, due to a disaster. A producer will select the losses in one year for benefits.

Dairy Programs:

The Dairy Assistance Program compensates producers for reduced milk production due to a natural disaster in a declared disaster county. Nationwide, \$16 million is available.

Milk Income Loss Contract Program (MILC). This program extends the MILC program for one additional month, through Sept. 30, 2007.

Emergency Conservation Program:

Nationwide, \$16 million has been made available for the cleanup and restoration of farm and agricultural production lands. It is too soon to tell how this will be implemented in California.

NOMINATIONS ACCEPTED FOR 2007 COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is looking for candidates for the farmer-elected County Committee election this fall.



The County Committee is an important part of the delivery of USDA services to farmers and ranchers. It is critical we ensure all eligible producers, especially women and under-represented ethnic groups, have an equal opportunity to be candidates.

FSA's relationship with farmers and ranchers goes back to the 1930s, when Congress set up a unique system in which federal farm programs were to be administered locally. The members of County Committees are nominated and elected by local producers who are eligible to participate in FSA programs. This grassroots approach gives farmers and ranchers a much needed voice in how federal actions affect their farming communities and their individual operations.

The County Committee is democracy in action. Once elected, committee members make decisions about how FSA programs will be carried out in the county. They are a direct link between the farm community and USDA.

LAA Up For Election This Year:

The area served by our County Committee is divided up into four Local Administrative Areas (LAAs). One member on the committee represents each LAA and serves a 3-year term. This year, LAA #1 (high desert area of San Bernardino County) is up for election. Contact our County FSA Office for exact boundaries.

A nomination form (FSA-669A) signed by the nominee is needed to nominate a farmer-candidate. Almost anyone eligible to take part in FSA programs may be a candidate for the FSA Committee.

Election Timetable:

June 15, 2007 Nomination period begins
 Aug. 1, 2007 Deadline to submit nomination forms.
 Nov. 2, 2007 Ballots are mailed to eligible voters.
 Dec. 3, 2007 Deadline to return ballots to FSA Office
 Jan. 1, 2007 New COC member takes office

If you are interested in being a candidate in this year's election, please contact our office before August 1st to request a nomination form. Nomination forms are available at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/elections>. Spanish versions are also available.

NONINSURED CROP ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (NAP)

NAP provides financial assistance to producers on non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur due to a natural disaster. To be eligible for NAP assistance, crops must be non-insurable crops and agricultural commodities for which catastrophic risk protection level of crop insurance is not available.



At the time of application, producers must pay a nonrefundable service fee for the eligible NAP crop by the application closing date. The cost is \$100 per crop per producer with a \$300 cap per county, not to exceed \$900 per producer.

The 2008 application closing dates for Los Angeles, Orange, and San Bernardino counties are summarized for the specific crops as shown below:

NAP Crops	2008 Application Closing Dates
Fall Planted Seed Crops	Aug. 1, 2007
Forage/Hay Crops	Sept. 1, 2007
Value Loss Crops	Sept. 1, 2007
Strawberries	Oct. 1, 2007
Honey, Onions	Dec. 1, 2007
Almonds, Apples, Apricots, Kiwis, Avocados, Cherries, Mint, Olives, Nectarines, Peaches, Pears, Grapes, Pistachios, Plums, Walnuts	Dec. 15, 2007
2009 Citrus Crops	Jan. 1, 2008
2009 Avocados	Jan. 1, 2008
Apples	Jan. 31, 2008
All other annual Crops	March 1, 2008

Continuous coverage: Once a NAP application (CCC-471 form) is approved by the County FSA Office, it provides continuous coverage and will remain in effect for each crop year unless the producer elects to cancel the coverage or fails to pay the application administrative fees before the application closing date.

Production Report Dates: Producers must provide the FSA Office with production records for all crops in which an acreage report is filed. This production must be reported no later than the application closing date for the applicable crop in the subsequent crop year.

Notice of Loss: To be eligible for a NAP payment, producers must notify the FSA Office within 15 calendar days after a disaster has affected the NAP crop.

For more information regarding NAP coverage, you can contact our FSA Office and ask for Holleen.

ACREAGE REPORT DEADLINE

The timely filing of an acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of benefits for a number of programs, including Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment Program, Conservation Reserve Program, Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, as well as marketing assistance loans and loan deficiency payments. To be timely, you must file an FSA-578 by **July 15, 2007**.

DIRECT & COUNTER-CYCLICAL PROGRAM (DCP) DEADLINE

The deadline to sign up for the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program – known as DCP – has been extended to **August 3, 2007**. Those producers who have eligible crop acreage base farms and have not yet enrolled in the program have been given additional time to sign up their farms. This is an annual program that requires a new signed contract every year.

MILK INCOME LOSS CONTRACT EXTENSION (MILCX) PAYMENT RATES

Monthly MILCX Program payment rates are listed below and are maintained on the web site located at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/psd>.

MILC Payment Rates for FY 2007

October 2006	\$0.4318
November 2006	\$0.4386
December 2006	\$0.4284
January 2007	\$0.0340
February 2007	\$0.1020
March 2007	\$0.0000
April 2007	\$0.0000
May 2007	\$0.0000
June 2007	\$0.0000

PREVENTING FRAUD & WASTE

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Risk Management Agency (RMA) are partners in preventing fraud, waste and abuse in the Federal Crop Insurance Program. FSA has been, and will continue to, assist RMA and insurance providers by monitoring crop conditions throughout the growing season. In addition, FSA will refer all suspected cases of fraud, waste and abuse to RMA. Producers can report suspected cases to FSA or RMA.

CONTINUOUS CRP SIGN-UP

Environmentally desirable land devoted to certain conservation practices may be enrolled in CRP at any time under continuous sign up provisions. Offers are automatically accepted provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements. Continuous CRP enrollments are not subject to competitive bidding.

To be eligible for Continuous CRP, a producer must have owned or operated the land for at least 12 months prior to submitting the offer. Exceptions to the rule include:

- if the new owner acquired the land due to the previous owner's death;
- the ownership change occurred due to foreclosure where the owner exercised a timely right or redemption in accordance with state law; or
- the circumstances of the acquisition present adequate assurance to FSA that the new owner did not acquire the land for the purpose of placing it in CRP.

To be eligible for placement in CRP, land must be either cropland that has been planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity four of the previous six crop years from 1996 to 2001, and which is physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity; or certain marginal pastureland.

The following conservation practices are eligible for Continuous CRP sign up: riparian buffers; wildlife habitat buffers; wetland buffers; filter strips; wetland restoration; grass waterways; shelterbelts; living snow fences; contour grass strips; salt tolerant vegetation; and shallow water areas for wildlife.

All eligible owners and operators, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status, shall have an opportunity to submit requests to place land in CRP. For more information contact the county office staff for details.

Dates to Remember

July 4, 2007	Office Closed – Independence Day
July 15, 2007	Acreage Reporting Deadline for other Crops
August 1, 2007	Deadline to submit COC nomination forms
August 3, 2007	DCP Signup Deadline
September 3, 2007	Office Closed – Labor Day

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Farm Service Agency
Los Angeles-Orange-San Bernardino County FSA Office
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SPECIAL ACCOMODATIONS

Special accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impaired, or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, please call our office at (661) 942-9549.

CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINT PROCESS

Any person, class or group of persons may file a discrimination complaint within 180 days of an alleged discriminatory action. Complaints may be filed in writing or orally with the agency head, any designated agency official or the Secretary of Agriculture, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. Assistance in filing a complaint can be obtained by calling or visiting any FSA office.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance programs. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202)-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.