

SOLANO-NAPA COUNTY FSA NEWS

August 2006

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IMPORTANT DATES

8/31/06: Last day for Solano County producers to sign up for Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)

9/1/06: Last day to purchase NAP coverage on 2007 forage crops and garbanzo beans

12/4/06: Deadline to return signed ballot for COC election, LAA3

12/15/06: Last day to purchase NAP coverage on orchard crops for 2007

1/31/07: Final date to apply for LDP on 2006 wool or pelts

2/15/07: Deadline to apply for Emergency Loan due to winter rain & flooding

EMERGENCY CONSERVATION PROGRAM (ECP) SIGNUP FOR SOLANO COUNTY

USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) provides emergency funding and technical assistance for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters, such as the flooding which occurred 12/30/05 through 2/2/06.

County FSA committees determine land eligibility based on on-site inspections of damage, taking into account the type and extent of damage. For land to be eligible, the natural disaster must create new conservation problems that, if left untreated would:

- ✓ Impair or endanger land;
- ✓ Materially affect the land's productive capacity;
- ✓ Represent unusual damage which, except for wind erosion, is not the

type likely to recur frequently in the same area; and

- ✓ Be so costly to repair that Federal assistance is or will be required to return the land to productive agriculture use.

Conservation problems existing prior to the applicable disaster are ineligible for ECP assistance.

ECP program participants receive cost-share assistance of up to 75% of the cost to implement approved emergency conservation practices, as determined by the county committee. Individual or cumulative requests for cost-sharing of \$50,000 or less per person, per disaster, are approved at the county committee level. Technical assistance may be provided by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

To rehabilitate farmland, ECP program participants may implement emergency conservation practices, such as:

- Removal of debris
- Land shaping and grading
- Fence restoration
- Conservation structures

Cost-sharing is NOT authorized for:

- Rehabilitating stream banks, channels, levees, dikes and structures within streams
- Removing debris that does not interfere with normal farming operations
- Restoring minor damage that the applicant can correct without federal assistance
- Land susceptible to frequent damage due to its location

Sign-up for ECP is August 1 through August 31, 2006. If you have not yet filed a request for cost-share, contact this office at 707-678-1931 for an appointment.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVE PROGRAM (EQIP)

Napa & Solano NRCS:

NAPA COUNTY NRCS

The deadline for planning, design and permitting assistance for EQIP has been extended to 9/20/06 for Napa County farmers and ranchers. This extension is due to the severe damages suffered by many farms in the 12/31 flood event.

The focus of the Napa County EQIP program is multi-faceted, with an emphasis on helping to promote and fund sustainable farming and ranching technologies. This includes promotion of reduced soil tillage via cover crops, integrated pest management programs, riparian and wetland restoration, and a variety of other measures to protect water quality, restore fisheries, and reduce dependence on external chemical inputs for agriculture.

For ranches, the program assists with livestock water, noxious weed management, rangeland seeding, and erosion control on roads. Conservation projects on ranches not only benefit grazing lands, but also provide protection of water quality.

EQIP applications are taken on a continuous basis, but final deadlines for funding the coming cycle of 2007 projects is rapidly approaching! *If you want further information on Napa County EQIP, contact Phill Blake or Kelly Gin at 707-252-4188.*

SOLANO COUNTY NRCS

Applications for cost share assistance on projects that conserve water, reduce erosion or enhance natural resources are being accepted for Solano County EQIP.

EQIP strives to address significant natural resource concerns. Depending on items addressed by the Local Work Group (NRCS, FSA Co. Committee, Solano & Dixon Resource Conservation Districts, SID, and other interested agencies), qualifying practices may include: Conservation Tillage, Tail Water Returns, Irrigation Systems that reduce water loss, Water Quality Improvement, to mention just a few.

A Management or Conservation Plan must be written prior to applying for EQIP funds; therefore it is very important to start the process early. Planning for 2007 EQIP funds should start as soon as possible.

To learn more about NRCS cost-share and technical assistance, Solano County producers may visit the NRCS office at 1170 N. Lincoln, Suite 110, in Dixon, or call Walt Cheechov, Jim Schneider or Sally Negroni at 707-678-1655 extension 3.

COUNTY COMMITTEE (COC) ELECTIONS FOR LAA 3

The COC is a grassroots approach to give farmers and ranchers a much-needed say in how federal actions affect the agricultural community and their individual operations.

The COC is accountable to the State Committee, oversees the work of the county office, and acts in an advisory capacity to the Farm Loan Manager.

Nominees for LAA 3 are:

Tom Galindo

Craig Gnos

Jeanine Holdener

LAA 3: northeast section of Solano county, east of interstates 505 and 80 and north of Air Base Parkway and Hay Road.

Ballots will be mailed to known eligible voters of LAA 3 beginning November 3. Farm owners, operators, tenants and share-croppers of legal voting age can vote if they are eligible to take part in any FSA program. Spouses may also be eligible to vote. *If you do not receive a ballot and believe you should have, please contact this office.* Ballots must be returned to this office or postmarked by December 4, 2006.

PLEASE VOTE for one candidate only, and be sure to sign your ballot where indicated in order for your vote to count.

2006 DIRECT & COUNTER-CYCLICAL PROGRAM (DCP) SIGNUP DEADLINE

If you have not yet enrolled your farm in DCP, contact this office immediately for an appointment!

CCC-509's with signatures obtained before September 30 will be accepted, but the farm will be assessed a \$100 late-file fee before it can be approved and benefits paid.

2005 COUNTER-CYCLICAL (CC) PAYMENTS

Final 2005 CC payment rates for wheat and oats are zero because their effective price exceeds their respective target prices. Barley is entitled to a final 2005 CC payment because the effective price is below the target price. Payments have been issued to eligible producers.

REPORTING CROP ACREAGES

In order to be eligible for benefits for most programs, you must certify to your farm crop acreages.

The final date to timely file a report of planted acreage for fall-seeded crops was April 30 and for spring-seeded was July 15. Late-file reports will be accepted but a fee will be charged.

The following programs require acreage reports:

- ✓ Direct & CounterCyclical Program
- ✓ Wool/Mohair/Unshorn Pelt LDPs
- ✓ LDPs for grain crops and oilseeds
- ✓ Conservation Reserve Program
- ✓ Non-Insured Assistance Program

NON-INSURED ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

NAP is a federally funded program that provides financial assistance to producers of noninsurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occurs as the result of natural disasters.

Eligible producers must apply for coverage of noninsurable crops. All applications for coverage must be filed and the applicable service fees paid at the FSA office by the application closing date.

The deadline of *September 1* is for all forage crops (pasture, alfalfa, etc) and garbanzo beans, whether fall-planted or spring-planted.

NOTE: Because so many producers in Solano county are planting garbanzo beans in the fall, the deadline of September 1 has been established for purchase of coverage for ALL garbanzo beans, regardless of whether planted in the fall or the spring.

For coverage, you must pay a service fee of \$100 per crop, not to exceed \$300 per producer per county, or not to exceed \$900 if you are in multiple counties.

You should review and apply for coverage on all crops you intend to grow, and specify the intended use of that crop. For example, if you obtain coverage on native grass for grazing, the \$100 fee will also cover any rye annual for grazing, or mixed forage for grazing. However, if you have rye annual (or any other grass) for forage, that requires an additional \$100 fee.

When your NAP covered crop is affected by a natural disaster, you must notify this office by completing a Notice of Loss, CCC-576, within 15 days of the date of the disaster occurrence, or the date damage to the crop becomes apparent to you.

Do not harvest or dispose of the crop until the Notice of Loss has been filed in the county office and a loss adjustor has had the opportunity to inspect the damaged crop.

Crop losses are determined on a unit basis. A unit includes all the acreage of the crop in the county in which the producer has the same interest. For example, land owned by a producer is included in the same unit with land cash-leased by the producer.

You are required to provide your annual production on crops covered under NAP, and to provide the office with a report of planted acreage (or zero report). Failure to follow through with these requirements will affect the APH (actual production history) on which you are paid if you suffer a loss.

EMERGENCY FARM LOANS AVAILABLE

Because of physical and production losses caused by unprecedented rainfall 12/17/05 through 4/26/06, many counties in California have been named eligible for USDA emergency farm loans. Both Solano and Napa counties qualify.

Farmers have 8 months to apply for the loan to help cover part of their actual losses. To be eligible, they must:

- Have suffered at least a 30% loss of normal production directly related to the above-cited cause
- Be able to repay the loan and any other loans
- Be unable to obtain credit elsewhere
- Have adequate security
- Have multi-peril crop insurance if available.

Applicants must complete a certification of disaster losses, reflecting the exact dates and nature of the disaster and how it caused the loss or damage.

The authorization for FSA to accept emergency loan applications under this authorization expires on February 15, 2007.

KEEP TRACK OF HEAT RELATED LOSSES

Even through the recent heat wave has finally broken, it's effects linger. Around the state, losses have occurred in the milk and poultry industry, and grapes have shriveled on the vine.

If you have had a loss as a result of the high heat, we suggest you report the loss to the Ag Commissioner and to this office. There is no program in effect at this time to respond to these losses; however, it's always a good idea to document what has happened on your farm.

**US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Solano-Napa County Farm Service Agency
1170 North Lincoln Street, Suite 109
Dixon, California 95620**

**COUNTY FSA OFFICE HOURS: 8am-4:30pm Monday-Friday
Closed on Holidays
Closed: September 4, Labor Day
October 9, Columbus Day**

The Solano-Napa County Committee (COC) regularly scheduled meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at 1 PM in the county FSA office. These are public meetings.

IMPORTANT WEB PAGES

**USDA Homepage: www.usda.gov
Farm Service Agency: www.fsa.usda.gov
California State FSA Homepage: www.fsa.usda.gov/ca/
Risk Management Agency: www.rma.usda.gov
Natural Resource Conservation Service: www.nrcs.usda.gov
Solano County Ag Commissioner: www.solanocounty.com
Napa County Ag Commissioner:**

<http://www.co.napa.ca.us/Gov/Departments/DeptDefault.asp?DID=26400>

Special accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment. If special accommodations are required, please call the FSA office and we will be happy to make any arrangements that are needed.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (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, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC, 20250-9410, or call 202-720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.