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Farm Service Agency

February 2008

Issue 1

Sonoma-Marin County News

Petaluma USDA Service Center

Sonoma-Marin County FSA Office

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www.fsa.usda.gov/ca

Hours

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

County Committee

Craig Jacobsen, Chair
Richard Grossi, Vice Chair
Diane Starkey, Member
Phil Dolcini, Member
Jeff Jones, Member
Vacant, Minority Advisor

*County Committee meets
The first Tuesday after the
first Monday every other
month.*

Staff

Lisa V. Velasquez, CED
Debbie Castle, Prog Tech
Cecelia Medina, Prog Tech
Michelle, Payne, Prog Tech



NAP Production Reporting

Production records for individual crops need to be filed with our office to establish an approved NAP yield. If this is the first year you participated in NAP, you can provide production and acreage information from prior years to establish your yield. If you participated in NAP in previous years, you must report your production and acreage on a yearly basis to keep your yield up-to-date. Records submitted must be reliable and verifiable. Records need to show crop disposition. We recommend producers submit 2007 production records as soon as harvest is complete. ***All production records must be submitted by the subsequent crop year's final acreage reporting date.***

NAP Coverage Deadline

March 1, 2008 is the deadline date for producers to apply for Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage using form CCC-471 (Application for Coverage). Related service fees are due when the application is filed. The application and service fee **MUST** be filed by **March 1, 2008**, the closing date for 2008 spring seeded crops including vegetables.

The service fee is \$100 per crop per county or \$300 per producer per county. The fee cannot exceed a total of \$900 per producer for individuals with farming interests in multiple counties. Limited resource producers may request a waiver for service fees.

To qualify, a producer must be a landowner, tenant or sharecropper who shares in the risk of producing an eligible crop.

Disaster Eligibility Date Extended

Eligible farmers and ranchers who suffered livestock, livestock feed and crop losses that occurred before Dec. 31, 2007, can now apply to receive disaster payments.

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting applications and making payments for quantity losses under CDP that occurred before Dec. 31, 2007. FSA is currently issuing LCP and LIP payments for losses that occurred up to Feb. 28, 2007, and will soon issue payments for losses incurred during the remainder of 2007. FSA will conduct sign-up and begin making payments for quality losses under CDP this spring. More information about CDP, LCP and LIP is available online at <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>.

The Dairy Disaster Assistance Payment (DDAP-III) Program, which provides benefits to eligible dairy producers for production losses suffered as a result of natural disasters since Jan. 1, 2005, has also been extended to include disasters occurring before Dec. 31, 2007.

As a result, DDAP-III sign-up, which began Dec. 3, 2007, **has been temporarily suspended** until such time as automation, policy, procedure and other administrative items can be updated accordingly. FSA will announce when DDAP-III program sign-up will resume.

If you are a dairy producer considering sign up for the Dairy Disaster Program, check with your nearest Service Center office for resumption of sign up. Or you can visit the website www.fsa.usda.gov/ca where the DDAP III sign up resumption announcement will be posted.



2008 COC Election Results

Congrats to *Jeff Jones*, a Dairyman is the newly elected COC member, replacing *Cynthia Crane* who reached her term limit in 2007. [A special thank you to Cynthia Crane for all her hard work and dedication.](#)

Welcome back to *Diane Starkey*, she was re-elected for another 3 year term!

FSA appreciates all of the voters for taking the time to complete the election ballot. The county committee system works only because of your participation.

The committee members held their organizational meeting in January and determined *Craig Jacobsen* will serve as the county committee chairperson and *Richard Grossi* will serve as vice-chairperson.

Direct and Guaranteed Loans Available

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, or regularly borrow from FSA, direct and guaranteed loans are available now.

Ask your lender about an FSA loan guarantee if you've had a set back and your lender is reluctant to extend or renew your loan. Loan funds are available now — 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 staff will help you complete the necessary forms and application, and help you understand what information is required and where to get it. To find out more about FSA loan programs, contact the county office staff.

Honey Loans Available

Marketing assistance loans and loan deficiency payments for 2007 crop year honey are available until March 31, 2008. The national loan rate for honey is \$0.60 per pound. Current market prices exceed the loan rate, so LDPs are not available now.

To be eligible for a loan, the producer must have produced honey in the United States during the calendar year for which the loan is requested, and extracted the honey on or before Dec. 31 of the applicable crop year; have continuous beneficial interest in the honey through date of repayment of the loan; and been responsible for the financial risk of keeping the honey. Producers are responsible for maintaining the quality of farm-stored honey during the term of the loan.

The honey must be produced in the U.S. by an eligible producer, from an approved floral source, and stored in approved containers. The containers must be marked with the producer's name, type of honey, number of container and net weight. Pre-loan inspections are required before funds can be disbursed. Honey used as collateral may not be disposed of without approval of the county office staff.

Foreign Buyers Information

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA.

Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA with 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, Realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

Controlled Substance

Any person who is convicted under federal or state law of a controlled substance violation could be ineligible for USDA payments or benefits. Violations include planting, harvesting or growing a prohibited plant. Prohibited plants include marijuana, opium, poppies and other drug producing plants.

Special Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact the county FSA office staff directly or by phone.

Power of Attorney

For those who find it difficult to visit the county office personally because of work schedules, distance, health, etc., we have a power of attorney form available that enables you to designate another person to conduct your business at the office. If you are interested, please contact our office or any Farm Service Agency office near you for more information.

Payment Limitation/Eligibility

USDA payments and benefits are subject to producer eligibility and limitation provisions as defined by law.

Spousal Signatures

Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office staff by either spouse.



Ed Schafer was sworn in as the 29th Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture on January 28, 2008. Secretary Schafer brings a record as an innovative two-term governor of North Dakota to USDA along with extensive private sector experience as both an entrepreneur and a business executive. For Secretary Schafer's complete background, visit "About USDA" at www.usda.gov.

BANK ACCOUNT CHANGES

Current policy mandates that FSA payments be electronically transferred into your bank account. In order for timely payments to be made, producers need to notify the FSA county office staff if your account has been changed or if another financial institution purchases your bank. Payments can be delayed if the FSA office is not aware of updates to your account and routing numbers.

Conservation Compliance

All participants in USDA programs are required to have a conservation system in place on all the highly erodible land (HEL) that they operate. Several areas where problems can arise with complying with a conservation system are; renting new cropland, purchasing new land, breaking out additional cropland, planting different crops such as soybeans, and changing or removing existing conservation practices.

It is very important that you contact the FSA office before doing any of the above. Also, it is very important that you contact our office before modifying - tiling, draining, dredging, filling, or leveling - any wetland or drainage ditch. Failure to obtain advance approval for any of these situations can result in loss of all Federal payments and eligibility.

2002 Farm Bill Extension

The 2008 catch all spending bill signed by President Bush on Dec. 26, 2007, extends FSA's authority to administer the Conservation Reserve Program and marketing loan benefits for wool and mohair through March 15, 2008. It also allows the Milk Price Support Program to continue operating at current price support levels through March 15, 2008. Under the 2002 Farm Bill, USDA's authority to administer these three programs expired on Dec. 31, 2007.

The law also provides \$3.3 billion in direct and guaranteed loan funds for FSA's Farm Loan Programs.

Kansas City Mails 1099-G

During the last week of January, producers who have received payments from FSA should have also received a CCC-1099-G from the Kansas City office. A CCC-1099-G is a report to the Internal Revenue Service about FSA payments made to you in calendar year 2007. The CCC-1099-G is a service to help participating producers report taxable income. It is not intended to replace the program participant's responsibility to report income to the IRS.

If you received a CCC-1099-G, we recommend that you check the amounts shown with those in your records to see that the amounts are correct. Refunds will no longer be reported on the 1099-G, but will be available online from the FSA Financial Inquiries (FSA-FI) web-based database. Program participants with eAuthentication user ID's and passwords can access their refund information at FSA-FI and select "Inquiry Type 1099/Refund Reports". Refund amounts are displayed on the Producer's Year-to-Date Activity web page.

If you have a question concerning the 1099-G refund information, you may contact your local FSA office for assistance locating the correct payment data. If you choose to visit the office, bring your CCC-1099-G with you.

County Committee Advisors

FSA County Committee (COC) Advisors are a valued voice for under represented groups and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. To recruit Advisors, county committee members and their county executive directors are actively reaching out to under represented producer groups.

The COC shall have submitted the name of their nominee to the State Committee for confirmation, no later than February 1 of each year. COC Advisor nominees must be actively participating in farming or ranching in the county or area, and evidence their willingness and ability to serve in writing.

Contact the County Executive Director for more information and duties of the position.

APPEAL PROCESS

After an FSA official makes a decision on your request for USDA services or application, you will be sent a letter informing you of the decision and options you can pursue if you disagree.

Generally, program participants have three choices – an informal review with the original agency decision maker, an opportunity for mediation and appeal to the USDA National Appeal Division

Selected Interest Rates for February 2008	
90-Day Treasury Bill	3.0%
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	3.875%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	5.0%
Limited Resource Loans	5.0%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	4.0%
Emergency Loans	3.75%

Dates to Remember	
World Ag Expo	Feb. 12 – 14 in Tulare, CA
Washington's Birthday Holiday	Feb. 18 office closed
Small Farm Conference	Feb. 24- 26 Visalia, CA
NAP Sign-Up Deadline	March 1, 2008 Vegetables

Visit our Web site at www.fsa.usda.gov/ca

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