



Farm Service Agency

October 2006

Sonoma/Marin County News
USDA Service Center

Sonoma/Marin County FSA

1301 Redwood Way, 190
Petaluma, CA 94954
707-664-8593 (phone)
707-794-7902 (fax)

Hours

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

County Committee

Cynthia Crane
Craig Jacobsen
Diane Starkey
Phil Dolcini
Richard Grossi

County Committee meets
The first Tuesday after
the first Monday of every
month

Staff

Lisa Velasquez
County Executive Director
Debbie Castle
Program Technician

2007 DCP Sign Up

Are you planning to participate in the 2007 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program? If so, contact the nearest FSA county office to sign a 2007 DCP contract (CCC-509). Sign up began Oct 1, 2006, and must be completed before June 1, 2007. (You can sign your contract after June 1 and before Sept. 30, 2007, but you will be assessed a late-signing fee of \$100.)

When you sign the CCC-509, you are agreeing to:

- comply with highly erodible land conservation and wetland conservation provisions on all your land;
- devote acreage equal to the base acreage to an agricultural or conserving use;
- effectively control noxious weeds and otherwise maintain base acres according to sound agricultural practices;
- not plant perennial fruits and vegetables or harvest annual FAVs (other than lentils, mung beans, and dry peas) or wild rice on base acres (Exceptions: Double-cropping covered commodities or peanuts with wild rice, fruits, or vegetables shall be permitted in any region in which there is a history of this type of double-cropping.);
- file acreage report with respect to all cropland on the farm; and
- notify the county office staff when there is a transfer of or change of interest of a producer.

The DCP contracts are not like the old seven-year Production Flexibility Contracts. You must designate shares and sign a new DCP contract each year.

County Committee Election

Just a reminder: Be watching your mailbox for your official county office committee election ballot starting early next month. Ballots will be mailed to all eligible voters on November 3. If you don't receive a ballot, feel free to notify the county FSA office. Completed and signed ballots are due back in the county office by the close of business on Dec. 4, 2006.

LAA THAT WILL BE VOTING

LAA Boundary Description:

LAA 1 – West Hwy 101, south of Petaluma-Point Reyes Road through “D” Street to Lakeville to Hwy 101, North of the Golden Gate Bridge, East of the Pacific Ocean. Dist. A also includes the residents of the Point Reyes Peninsula. (Pierce Point and Sir Francis Drake)

LAA 2 – The boundaries of District C are, West of Hwy 101, South of Bodega Hwy and through Hwy 12, North of Petaluma-Point Reyes Road, “D” Street to Lakeville to Hwy 101.

ELECTRONIC LDP SERVICE AVAILABLE

If you are connected to the Internet, you can apply from home for an Electronic Loan Deficiency Payment, or eLDP, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and receive approval and payment by direct deposit within 48 hours.

To participate in the service, you must meet all eligibility requirements for marketing assistance loans and LDPs for the commodity. The voluntary eLDP service has stringent security measures to protect your private information.

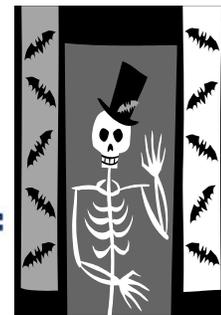
You must have an active USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account, which requires an e-mail address and filling out an online registration form at:

<http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/fofollowed> by a visit to the county office for identity verification.

If you have Internet access, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/dafl/default.htm to learn more about FSA loans.



United States Department of Agriculture



TAA DEADLINE ANNOUNCED

If you are a producer of a commodity, which has recently suffered from low prices due to increasing imports, you may be eligible for technical assistance and a financial payment under the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program. A petition must be filed to USDA's Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS) between August 15, 2006 and January 31, 2007 in order to receive benefits under the TAA.

Benefits under this program include cash payments and various educational benefits that can include occupational training. In prior years, TAA benefits have been provided to producers of blueberries, concord grapes, potatoes, lychees, avocados, and to fishermen of shrimp and salmon, to name a few.

The petition for benefits must be received by the TAA office by close of business January 31, 2007. The TAA office address is Foreign Agricultural Service, ITP/IPPD, MS-1201, Washington, DC 20250-1021, or facsimile number is (202) 720-0876, or by e-mail to trade.adjustment@fas.usda.gov. Use of fax or e-mail is recommended.

For further information or assistance in completing form FAS-930, contact: Jean-Louis Pajot, Coordinator, Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers, FAS, USDA, (202) 720-2916, email: trade.adjustment@fas.usda.gov. Additional program information can be obtained at the TAA website. The URL is <http://www.fas.usda.gov/itp/taa/taaindex.htm>

FSA FARM LOANS AVAILABLE FOR BEGINNING FARMERS OR RANCHER

Beginning farmers or ranchers can get a farm ownership loan by using funds set aside especially for them by the Farm Service Agency. These loans finance up to 100 percent of the land's purchase price (up to the \$200,000 loan limit), and the term of the loan can be up to 40 years.

The interest rate can be 5.625 percent, or the "limited resource" rate of 5.00 percent. The regular farm ownership loan funds may also be used in joint financing where FSA lends up to 50 percent of the amount financed and another lender provides 50 percent or more. FSA may charge an interest rate of not less than 5 percent with terms up to 40 years.

Beginning Farmer Down Payment ownership Program (10-40-50)

Purpose: Obtain help financing the purchase of a farm up to \$250,000 of the purchase price or the appraised value whichever is less. The applicant must put down at least 10 percent. The Farm Service Agency finances up to 40 percent of the purchase price. The remaining 50 percent of the purchase price can be financed by the seller or through a conventional lender. The lender can obtain a guarantee from FSA if the customer is eligible.

Rates: The FSA loan for 40 percent will be locked in for the full 15 years. Currently the rate is 4%. The loan for the balance of 50% should be the rate the contract holder or lender would charge an average customer.

Qualification: Beginning farmer applicants must have been farming for at least three years and not more than ten. Applicants cannot own real estate that exceeds 30% of the average farm size for the county.

Selected Interest Rates for October 2006	
90-Day Treasury Bill	5.125%
Farm Operating Loans - Direct	5.375%
Farm Ownership Loans - Direct	5.625%
Limited Resource Loans	5.0%
Farm Ownership Loans - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	4.0%
Emergency Loans	3.75%



Farm Reconstitutions

In Farm Service Agency terms, farms are constituted to group all tracts having the same owner and the same operator under one farm serial number. When changes in ownership or operation take place, a farm reconstitution is called for. The reconstitution or recon is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation.

When combining different tracts into one farm unit, FSA simply adds each tract's base acreage to determine the base acreage for the newly constituted farm. If a tract is removed from a farm, such as when there is an operator or ownership change, the base acreage that is attributed to the tract is removed from the farm. In some cases, the base acreage could be distributed by different means. Visit your county office for more information.

The final date to request a 2006 reconstitution was Aug. 1st, 2006. If 2006 DCP direct payments have already been issued on the farm, the reconstitution will be effective for 2007, unless the payments are refunded.

MILC PROGRAM PAYMENT?

There will be a delay in the MILC payments for fiscal year 2006 & 2007.

Our technicians are working on a glitch in the software that not only effects us here locally but nationwide. We should have the system up and running by November 1st. When we receive authorization to resume processing MILC payments they will be issued as soon as possible. We apologize for the inconvenience.

NAP 2007 Closing Dates

There is a \$100 administrative fee for this program and is filed on a CCC-471, if you wish to apply for NAP in 2007, please provide your check and signed application prior to the posted closing date.

Crop	Application Closing Dates
Onions	12/01/2006
Honey	12/01/2006
Almond, Apricot, Asparagus, Avocados, Cranberries, Cherries, Grapes, Kiwi, Mint, Nectarine, Olives, Peach, Pears, Persimmon, Pistachios, Plums, Pomegranate, Rye Grain, Strawberries, Walnuts	12/15/2006
2008 Citrus	01/01/2007
2007 Apples	01/31/2007

California Farm Conference March 4-6, 2007 – Monterey, Ca.

Thanks to the generous support of the USDA, scholarships will be available to support the participation of small farmers with limited means, as well as agriculture students and farmers' market managers.

We would like to invite you to apply for a scholarship to attend the California Farm Conference. The statewide conference will be held March 4-6, 2007 in Monterey. The three-day conference features on-farm tours, educational workshops and networking opportunities.

All scholarship recipients must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents. For farmers, priority is given to small-scale producers with limited resources or an economic disadvantage. Up to two members of a farm or household may apply using one form.

You may obtain an application from your Scholarship Coordinator in your county or for a full list of the topics planned for the conference, or to register for the conference, visit www.californiafarmconference.com Applications are due by December 31, 2006.

Submit applications to the Scholarship Coordinator in your county or mail to: California Farm Conference, Attn: Scholarship Committee, P.O. Box 73614, Davis Ca. 95617 or fax to 888-712-4188

Scholarship Coordinator : Lisa Velasquez, 1301
Redwood Way, Suite 190, Petaluma, Ca. 94954
707-664-8593

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS



Dates to Remember	
Nov 3	County Committee ballots mailed to voters
Nov 10	Veterans Day Holiday
Nov 23	Thanksgiving Holiday
Dec 4	Last day to return county committee election ballots
Dec. 25	Christmas Holiday
Continues	Continuous CRP
Continues	Farm Storage Facility Loans

The U.S. 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, D.C., 20250-9410, or call 202-720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.