



# Riverside-San Diego FSA News

May 2010

## Farm Service Agency California

### Riverside-San Diego

82-901 Bliss Ave  
Indio, CA 92201  
Ph: 760/347-3675  
Fx: 760/342-5346  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/ca](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ca)

### Hours

Monday-Friday  
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

### County Committee

David Zeiders, LAA1  
Efrin Castro, LAA 2  
Jack Seiler, LAA 3  
Raymond Lodge, LAA 4

### County Staff

Desiree Houston  
County Executive Director  
[Desiree.houston@ca.usda.gov](mailto:Desiree.houston@ca.usda.gov)

Thomas Hunton  
Farm Loan Manager  
(661)336-0967  
[Tom.hunton@ca.usda.gov](mailto:Tom.hunton@ca.usda.gov)

Maria Padron  
Program Technician  
[Maria.padron@ca.usda.gov](mailto:Maria.padron@ca.usda.gov)

Mariana Montes  
Program Technician  
[Mariana.montes@ca.usda.gov](mailto:Mariana.montes@ca.usda.gov)

Jenny Montez  
Program Technician  
[Jenny.montez@ca.usda.gov](mailto:Jenny.montez@ca.usda.gov)



## 2010 FSA County Committee Elections

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees is important to ALL farmers and ranchers, whether beginning or long established, with large or small operations. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

County Committee (COC) members are a critical component of FSA operations. The intent is to have the COC reflect the makeup of the producers and to represent all constituents. This means wherever possible, minorities, women or lower income producers need to be on the committee to speak for these underrepresented groups.

County committees provide local input on:

- Commodity price support loans and payments
- Conservation programs
- Incentive, indemnity and disaster payments for some commodities
- Emergency programs
- Payment eligibility

FSA county committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws. County committee members apply their judgment and knowledge to make local decisions.

### Election Period

June 15, 2010 – The nomination period begins. Request nomination forms from the local USDA Service Center or obtain online at:

[http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA\\_File/sa0669a\\_commiteelectform.pdf](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/sa0669a_commiteelectform.pdf)

Aug. 2, 2010 - Last day to file nomination forms (FSA-669A) at the local USDA Service Center.

Nov. 5, 2010 - Ballots mailed to eligible voters.

Dec. 6, 2010 - Last day to return voted ballots to the USDA Service Center.

Jan. 1, 2011 - Newly elected county committee members take office.

### Who Can Hold Office

To hold office as a county committee member, a person must meet the basic eligibility criteria as follows:

- Participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA.
- Be eligible to vote in a county committee election.
- Reside in the LAA in which the person is a candidate. (LAA 3)

Causes for ineligibility:

- Removed or disqualified from the office of county committee member, alternate or employee.
- Removed for cause from any public office or have been convicted of fraud, larceny, embezzlement or any other felony.
- Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services.

### Nominations

To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign nomination form FSA-669A. The form includes a statement that the nominee agrees to serve if elected. This form is available at USDA Service Centers and online at:

[http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA\\_File/sa0669a\\_commiteelectform.pdf](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/sa0669a_commiteelectform.pdf)

Nomination forms for the 2010 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business on Aug. 2, 2010.

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## **Continued from Page 1: COC Election**

Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in an FSA program may be nominated for the county committee. Individuals may nominate themselves or others as a candidate. Additionally, organizations representing minority and women farmers or ranchers may nominate candidates. Nomination forms are filed in the office that administers the producer's farm records.

### **Who Can Vote**

Agricultural producers of legal voting age may be eligible to vote if they participate or cooperate in any FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm may also be eligible to vote. More information about voting eligibility requirements can be found in the FSA fact sheet titled "FSA County Committee Election - Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a County Committee Member." Producers may contact their local USDA Service Center for more information.

## **ACRE Program**

The Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) is a program authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill. Through ACRE, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers producers an alternative to Direct and Counter-cyclical (DCP) payments. The ACRE alternative provides eligible producers a state-level revenue guarantee, based on the 5-year state Olympic average yield and the 2-year national average price.

ACRE payments are made when both state- and farm-level triggers are met. By participating in ACRE, producers elect to forgo counter-cyclical payments. Producers also elect to receive a 20% reduction in direct payments and a 30% reduction in loan rates.

A decision to elect ACRE binds the producer to the program through the 2012 crop year, the last crop year covered by the 2008 Farm Bill. For more details contact your local FSA office

## **DCP Signup**

Enrollment for the 2010 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) will continue through June 1, 2010. USDA urges producers to make use of the eDCP automated website to sign up, or producers can visit any USDA Service Center to complete their 2010 DCP contract.

USDA computes DCP Program payments using base acres and payment yields established

for each farm. Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. For 2010, eligible producers may request advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment.

Contact the nearest FSA office for more information .

## **Farm Reconstitutions**

At FSA, 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 necessary. Another reason is when an owner and operator cannot agree about program participation (for example - ACRE participation).

### **Continue Page 3 Farm Recons**

### **Continued from Page 2: Farm Recons**

The reconstitution—or recon—is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. Remember, to be effective for the current year, recons must be requested by August 2, 2010 for farms enrolled in specific programs.

## **Farm Loan Programs**

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 for your farm, direct and guaranteed loans are currently available.

Ask your current commercial lender about an FSA loan guarantee if you've had a setback and your lender is reluctant to extend or renew your loan.

Farm ownership loans or farm operating loans may be obtained as direct loans for a maximum of up to \$300,000. Guaranteed loans can reach a maximum indebtedness of \$1,112,000. Producers are encouraged to apply early.

FSA employees can help you complete the necessary application and other forms, and help you understand what information is required and where to find it. To find out more about FSA loan programs, contact the county office staff.

## SURE Program

The Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disasters incurred in the crop years 2008 through September 30, 2011. To be eligible for SURE payments, a producer is required to obtain crop insurance on all crops in all counties or, if crop insurance is not available, to participate in the Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP) except for grazed acreage. However, crop insurance or NAP coverage is no longer required for crops that are not of economic significance or those where the administrative fee required to buy NAP coverage exceeds 10% of the value of the coverage.

Eligible farmers and ranchers who meet the definition of Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, or Beginning Farmer or Rancher are exempt from the risk management purchase requirement.

The following conditions trigger SURE payments:

- At least one crop of economic significance must suffer a 10% production loss due to an eligible disaster condition
- Crop of economic significance is a crop that has contributed or would have contributed at least 5% or more of the total expected revenue from all crops on the farm
- Crop is in a county declared a disaster county by the Secretary of Agriculture, or in contiguous counties, or producer shows proof of an individual loss of at least 50%.

SURE payments can apply to crop production or crop quality losses. Losses are measured with consideration to the whole-farm revenue, which includes crop insurance indemnities and commodity program payments, so that producers are not paid more than once for the same loss.

A SURE calculator is available at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=diap&topic=sure>. The calculator is not official, but is intended for educational use. A fact sheet and background are also available online.

## Tree Assistance Program (TAP)

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 has announced the TAP program which provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes, and vines that were lost by natural disaster occurring on or after January 1, 2008, and before October 1, 2011.

To qualify for TAP, orchardists and nursery tree growers must:

- Suffer qualifying tree, bush, and vine losses in excess of 15 percent mortality (after adjustment for normal mortality) from eligible natural disaster for the individual stand,
- Have owned the eligible trees, bushes, and vines, when the natural disaster occurred; however, eligible growers are not required to own the land on which eligible trees, bushes, and vines are planted,
- Replace eligible trees, bushes, vines within 12 months from the date the application is approved.

Orchardists and nursery tree growers may apply to receive TAP benefits beginning May 10, 2010, for losses suffered during calendar years 2008, 2009, and for losses suffered during January 1, 2010, to May 7, 2010.

The following table provides the final dates to submit a TAP application and supporting documentation.

<b>Date of Loss</b>	<b>Final Date to Submit an Application and Supporting Documentation</b>
Calendar Year 2008	July 6, 2010
Calendar Year 2009	July 6, 2010
January 1, 2010, to May 7, 2010	July 6, 2010
May 8, 2010, to September 30, 2011	Within 90 calendar days of the disaster event or date when the loss of trees, bushes, or vines, is apparent.

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PRESORTED STANDARD  
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
 DAVIS, CA  
 PERMIT #22

## Measurement Service

Farmers who would like a guarantee on their crop plantings and land use acreages can make it official by using the FSA measurement service. Producers must file a request with the county office staff and pay the cost of a field visit for GPS referencing of the farm. Measurement service is available using digital imagery. If data already exists in a certified database and an on-site visit is not required, there is no charge.

Incorrect acreage self-certification can result in reduced program payments, penalty, or loss of eligibility.

Producers can request ortho-imagery and CLU (common land unit) coordinates for their land (commonly referred to as a clip) at no charge. This service provides you with both acreages and field boundaries.

Dates to Remember	
May 31, 2010	Office CLOSED for Memorial Day
June 1, 2010	DCP Sign-up Closes
June 1, 2010	Recons Should be filed
July 5, 2010	Office CLOSED Independence Day Observed
July 6, 2010	TAP application closing date

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."