



NEWSLETTER



November 2012

Maricopa County FSA Office

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www.fsa.usda.gov/az

Hours
Monday - Friday
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Maricopa County Staff

Christina A. Day,
County Executive
Director

Shawneen Stevenson,
Farm Loan Manager

Tim Garcia, NRCS
District Conservationist

County Committee Voting Begins - Ballots Due Dec. 3

Ballots for this year's county committee election will be mailed to eligible voters on Nov. 5, 2012. Voters must complete their ballots and return them to the Farm Service Agency county office by the close of business on Dec. 3, 2012. If mailed, ballots must be postmarked by midnight Dec. 3, 2012.

The candidates in this year's election are:

Gary Gable is nominated in LAA #1, Maricopa County, to serve as a committee member. Eligible voters in a local administrative area #1 who have not received a ballot should contact the FSA county office staff.

Voter Requirements - Persons meeting requirements in **1 or 2, plus 3**, below, is eligible to vote:

1. Be of legal voting age and have an interest in a farm or ranch as any of the following:

- An individual
- The authorized representative of an entity
- Both spouses when property is owned jointly
- Spouses in community property states.

2. Is not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations on an entire farm.

3. Participates or cooperates in any FSA program that is provided by law.

Discrimination Prohibited - No person shall be denied the right to vote because of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation or marital or family status.

2011 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program Applications

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) will continue to accept SURE applications for 2011 crop losses through June 7, 2013. The SURE Program provides payments to producers when crop revenues are less than the crop guarantee. The SURE Program payment is equal to 60 percent of the difference between the crop guarantee and revenue. To determine the guarantee and revenue for the SURE Program, all crops on all farms for a producer are included in the calculation. Payments under the SURE Program are limited to \$100,000. To be eligible for the 2011 SURE Program, producers must have crop insurance on all insurable crops. For crops that are not covered by crop insurance such as pumpkins and cucumbers, producers must have purchased Non Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage at FSA. The crop insurance and NAP purchase requirement is waived for crops that are not economically significant to the farming operation. In addition, for SURE Payment the producer must have at least one crop with a 10 percent production loss.

For more information concerning the 2011 SURE program or other Farm Service Agency programs, contact your local FSA office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov

2013 Acreage Crop Reporting

Depending on your crop and region, the new acreage reporting date may be as early as Nov. 15, 2012. Call the office for questions.

Forage Production: Acreage and Production Reporting Date is 11/15.

Barley, Pecans, Potatoes, and Wheat: Acreage and Production Reporting date is 3/15.

Chile Peppers, Corn, Cotton, Cotton Ex Long Staple, Dry Beans, and all other crops not listed: Acreage and Production reporting date is: 7/15.

Grain Sorghum Acreage and Production reporting date is: 8/15.

Honey Numbers and Production

Reporting date is: 01/02 (January 2 of the same year or crop year ending December 31). The production reporting date is the same month and day but one year later (i.e. Production for 2012 crop year Barley must be reported by 3/15/2013.)

Apiculture Reporting date is: 11/15. This is an RMA crop and RMA reporting date will be used.

Hispanic and Women Farmer and Rancher Claims Period

USDA has announced that Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA in past decades can file claims between Sept. 24, 2012 and March 25, 2013.

The process offers a voluntary alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or female farmer and rancher who can prove that USDA denied their applications for loan or loan servicing assistance for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000.

As announced in February 2011, the voluntary claims process will make available at least \$1.33 billion for cash awards and tax relief payments, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief, to eligible Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers. There are no filing fees to participate in the program.

The Department will continue reaching out to potential Hispanic and female claimants, around the country to get the word out to individuals who may be eligible for this program so they have the opportunity to participate.

Call center representatives can be reached at 1-888-508-4429. Claimants must register for a claims package (by calling the number or visiting the website) and the claims package will be mailed to claimants. All those interested in learning more or receiving information about the claims process and claims packages are encouraged to attend meetings in your communities about the claims process and contact the website or claims telephone number.

Website: www.farmerclaims.gov

Phone: 1-888-508-4429

Claims Period: Sept. 24, 2012 - March 25, 2013.

Independent legal services companies will administer the claims process and adjudicate the claims. Although there are no filing fees to participate and a lawyer is not required to participate in the claims process, persons seeking legal advice may contact a lawyer or other legal services provider.

To read Secretary Tom Vilsack's entire news release click on the following link:

<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usda/home?contentid=2012/09/0309.xml&contentidonly=true>

Marketing Assistance Loans

A Marketing Assistance Loan (MAL) is available for producers who share in the risk of producing the crop. To be eligible, a producer must maintain continual beneficial interest in the crop from harvest until the loan is repaid or CCC takes title to the commodity, whichever is first. Once beneficial interest in a commodity is lost, the commodity is ineligible for loan — even if the producer regains beneficial interest.

Commodity loan eligibility also requires compliance with conservation and wetland protection requirements; beneficial interest requirements, acreage reporting and ensuring that the commodity meets Commodity Credit Corporation minimum grade and quality standards. The quality of the commodity in farm storage must be maintained throughout the term of the loan.

Producers do not have to participate in the Direct and Counter-Cyclical and/or ACRE Programs to be eligible for commodity loans.

Violating provisions of a marketing assistance loan may result in liquidated damages, calling in the loan for full payment and denial of future farm-stored loans.

Unauthorized Disposition of Grain Held as Collateral

If loan grain has been disposed of through feeding, selling or any other form of disposal without prior written authorization from the county office staff, it is considered unauthorized disposition. The financial penalties for unauthorized dispositions are severe and a producer's name will be placed on a loan violation list for a two-year period. Always call before you haul any grain under loan.

Receive News Electronically via GovDelivery

Many producers have already enrolled in the new GovDelivery system that provides notices, newsletters and reminders via email. It's free and its instant and can be sent to your home or office. FSA, like many other organizations, is working smarter and more efficiently. Conversion to electronic notifications via email helps conserve resources and save taxpayer dollars. County Committee ballots will continue to be mailed to all eligible producers.

If you haven't signed up yet, do so now. And encourage your neighbors to subscribe to receive free e-mail updates instantly: www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe

Changing Banks

Almost all Farm Service Agency payments are made electronically using direct deposit.

To keep the system running smoothly, it's critical to keep the county office staff up to date on changes in your financial institutions.

If you have changed accounts or institutions that affect the direct deposit of your FSA payments, contact the FSA county office so we can update our files to insure continued uninterrupted service.

Increased Guaranteed Loan Limit

The Farm Service Agency has announced that the loan limit for the Guaranteed Loan Program has increased to \$1,302,000. The limit is adjusted annually based on an inflation index and data compiled by the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

As a reminder, the one-time loan origination fee charged on FSA guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans is 1.5 percent of the guaranteed portion of the loan.

Producers should contact their FSA County Offices with questions about farm loans.

Rural Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency makes loans to rural youths to establish and operate income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5,000.

Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

- Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien
- Be 10 years to 20 years of age
- Comply with FSA's general eligibility requirements
- Reside in a rural area, city or town with a population of 50,000 or fewer people
- Be unable to get a loan from other sources
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the project and the loan, along with providing adequate supervision.

Stop by the county office for help preparing and processing the application forms.

Selling Land

If you plan on selling farmland, you should be aware of several consequences associated with FSA programs. For example, if you're planning to sell land that's enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program, the buyer must agree to continue the enrollment. If the buyer doesn't continue the CRP contract, you may be required to refund all of the payments you've received to date. Reviewing program implications with your local Farm Service Agency staff before completing a sale of farmland is always a prudent precaution.

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 85392-9505



PRESORTED STANDARD
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID
 AVONDALE, AZ
 PERMIT #50

Loans for the Socially Disadvantaged

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. Loan funds are available for operating loans and/or for the purchase or improvement of farms or ranches.

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, the FSA has provided priority funding for members of socially disadvantaged groups. A socially disadvantaged applicant is an individual who is a member of a group that has been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice without regard to his or her individual qualities.

Selected Interest Rates for November 2012	
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%
Farm Operating - Direct	1.125%
Farm Ownership - Direct	3.125%
Limited Resource	5.000%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.500%
Emergency	2.125%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.125%

Dates to Remember	
Nov 5th	County Committee ballots mailed
Nov 12th	Veteran Day Federal Holiday
Nov 22nd	Thanksgiving Day Federal Holiday
Dec. 5th	COC Ballots due to FSA Office
Dec. 25th	Christmas Federal Holiday
Jan 1, 2013	New Year Federal Holiday
March 25, 2013	Hispanic and Women Farmer and Rancher Claims Period ends.