

Farm Service Agency

Imperial County

FSA NEWS

July 2009

Newsletter 4

Address:

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Web Sites:

FSA: www.fsa.usda.gov
USDA: www.usda.gov
Farm Bill:
www.usda.gov/farmbill

Hours:

Monday-Friday
8:00 AM-4:30 PM

County Committee:

Curt Corda
Gary Mamer
Craig Alameda

Advisor:

Raul Rodriguez Jr.

County Executive Director:

Rosalinda Singh

Staff:

Carmen Perez, PT
Julia Contreras, PT
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NOMINATIONS ACCEPTED FOR 2009 COUNTY FSA COMMITTEE ELECTION

County FSA Committee members play a crucial role in helping the county office staff implement the Farm Bill Programs. Right now, producers can have an impact on the election of the county committee by nominating eligible candidates by the **August 3, 2009**, deadline. It is critical that we ensure all eligible producers, especially women and under-represented ethnic groups, have an equal opportunity to be a candidate. Farmers and ranchers who are eligible to participate in these USDA farm programs elect a 3-person committee, which reviews county office operations and makes some of the decisions on how to apply the programs locally. This grassroots approach gives farmers and ranchers a much-needed voice in how federal actions affect their farming communities and their farming operations.



Individuals may nominate themselves or others as candidates. Also, organizations representing socially disadvantaged minorities and women farmers or ranchers may also nominate candidates. To become a nominee, eligible individuals must complete and sign form FSA-669A. The form and other valuable information about FSA county committee elections are available online at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>; click on News & Events, then County Committee Elections. Nomination forms for the 2009 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business on **August 3, 2009**.

FSA will mail ballots to producers beginning November 6, 2009. The completed ballots are due back at the local county office by December 7, 2009, either via mail or in person.

The Local Administrative Area (LAA) up for election this year is that part of the Imperial Valley south of Keystone Road.

Acreage Reporting Deadline Extended

For 2009, the final crop acreage reporting date for all crops other than small grains is being extended to **August 14, 2009**. Late fees will not be applied if acreage reports are filed by August 14th and all other reporting requirements are met. Filing an accurate and timely report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of benefits for a variety of Farm Service Agency programs.

DCP & ACRE Signup Deadline

Signup for the 2009 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment (DCP) Program has been extended until August 14, 2009. Signup in the ACRE option is also available through August 14, 2009. FSA will not accept any late-filed applications.

FSA 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 2009, you may request to receive advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment for each commodity associated with the farm. Counter-cyclical payment rates vary depending on market prices and are issued only when the effective price for a commodity is statutorily set below its target price.

The new ACRE Program is an option for eligible DCP farms that allows participants to receive additional payments based on crop revenue reductions instead of only low national prices. Revenue considers both yields and prices, so the reductions can be attributed to low yields and/or low prices. Note that there must be both a revenue reduction for the farm and at least a 10% revenue reduction for the State.

Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL)

FSA offers 7-year low-interest loans to producers to build new or upgrade existing storage facilities and related essential, permanently affixed drying or handling equipment. FSFL's must be approved prior to site preparation, equipment purchase or construction and must be secured by a promissory note and security agreement. The maximum loan amount will be 85% of the net cost of the applicant's OWN needed storage or handling equipment not to exceed \$100,000 per borrower. Contact this office for more info.

Payment Limitation Reminder



For payment limitation purposes, the status date for change to an entity or joint operation will be based on how the entity or joint operation is structured as of June 1, 2009.

If the change became effective after June 1, 2009, the change(s) will become effective for the 2010 crop year.

Farm Reconstitutions



In program terminology, 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. The reconstitution — or recon — is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. Following are the different methods used:

Estate Method — the division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate;

Designation of Landowner Method — is the division of bases in the manner agreed to by the parent farm owner and purchaser or transferee. It may be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons. In order to use this method the land sold must have been owned for at least three years, or a waiver granted, and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding;

DCP Cropland Method — the division of bases in the same proportion that the DCP cropland for each resulting tract relates to the DCP cropland on the parent tract;

Default Method — the division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system.

If payments have already been issued on a particular farm, the reconstitution will be effective for the next year, unless the payments are refunded. **Request for recons on DCP & ACRE farms must be filed by August 1.**

FSA Power Of Attorney

For those who find it difficult to visit the county office personally because of work schedules, distance, health, etc., FSA has 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.

Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Coverage

The Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) was designed to reduce financial losses that occur when natural disasters cause a catastrophic loss of production or prevented planting of an eligible crop by providing coverage equivalent to Federal Catastrophic (CAT) Crop insurance. Statute limits NAP to each commercial crop or agricultural commodity, except livestock, for which CAT is not available.

In order to be eligible for new disaster assistance programs, like SURE, producers are required to timely purchase, at a minimum, CAT coverage for all insurable crops and/or NAP coverage for all non-insurable crops on their entire farm.

The closing dates for Imperial County are summarized for the specific crops as shown below (*if a particular crop is not identified in the chart below you must contact this office for that crop's application closing date*):

Imperial County NAP Crops	2010 application Closing Dates
Artichokes, winter vegetables, all melons (fall & spring), greens, lettuce, potatoes, sweet corn (fall & spring), tomatoes, watermelons, fall planted seed crops	Aug. 1, 2009
Value Loss and Controlled Environment Crops (nursery, flowers, aquaculture) market onions, forage (includes bermuda, sudan, klein, timothy, non-insurable alfalfa)	Sept. 1, 2009
Honey & mangos	Dec. 1, 2009
Almonds, Apricots, Kiwis, Cherries, Mint, Olives, Nectarines, Peaches, Pears, Grapes, Pistachios, Plums, Walnuts	Dec. 15, 2009
2011 Non-insurable tree crops	Jan. 1, 2010

NAP coverage for 2010 costs \$250 per crop, but not more than \$750 per producer per county, or not more than \$1,875 total per producer for all counties. The administration fee(s) must be paid by the above application closing dates. Limited resource producers are not subject to annual fees.

Producers who already have coverage on 2009 NAP crops may choose to continue coverage on the same crop or crops for 2010, if the applicable service fee is submitted by the application closing date. A new CCC-471 application for coverage is not required to be signed when applying for continuous coverage. Producers who choose to add a new crop(s) from previous year's

coverage or changing crop shares must file a new CCC-471 with signatures and pay the applicable service fee.

NAP basic provisions are now available as FSA form CCC-471 NAP BP. These basic provisions may be accessed through the FSA website identified on page 1.

To be eligible for a NAP payment, producers must fulfill ALL annual requirements of the NAP program, including (but not limited to) notifying the FSA Office within 15 calendar days after a disaster has affected the NAP crop and providing FSA proof of production no later than the next year's application closing date for that crop.

FSA Farm Loans

FSA loan programs are designed to help producers who are temporarily unable to obtain private or commercial credit elsewhere. The agency is committed to providing family farmers with loans to meet their farm credit needs and offers many types of loans including: Beginning Farmer/Rancher, Limited Resource Farmer/Rancher, Direct, Guaranteed, Disaster, Youth, and LO-DOC Loans. Eligibility requirements vary depending on loan type.

If you're having trouble getting the credit you need for your farm, or if you've suffered setbacks from natural disaster check out our website or contact the FSA farm loan staff @ 661 336-0967 XT 2.

Help Available to Stressed Farmers

In the past year, the economy, inclement weather, drought and other factors have hurt many farming operations around the country. These events pushed some farmers to the emotional breaking point. Watching their livelihood being threatened is difficult for farmers and ranchers and especially for those who care about them.

The National Suicide Prevention Hotline is available to help. If you know a farmer or rancher who is under stress and is reluctant to ask for help, or if you just need to talk to someone, call 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Your call will be routed to the crisis center nearest you, where trained staffers are available 24/7. This nationwide service is free and confidential. Help is just a phone call away. For more information, go to <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>. **This service is not affiliated with the US Department of Agriculture.**

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
 Farm Service Agency
 Imperial County FSA Office
 177 N. Imperial Avenue
 El Centro CA 92243

Dates to Remember

August 1, 2009	Reconstitution Deadline
August 3, 2009	County Committee Nomination Deadline
August 14, 2009	Acreage Reporting Deadline for all crops other than small grains
August 14, 2009	DCP & ACRE Enrollment Deadline
15 days of natural disaster or loss becomes apparent	NAP Notice of Loss (must file notice of loss on FSA form FSA-576)

REASONABLE ACCOMODATIONS

Special accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impaired, or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, please call our office at (661) 942-9549.

APPEAL PROCESS

After an FSA official makes a decision on your request or application for USDA services, you will be sent a letter informing you of the decision and options you can pursue if you disagree. Generally, appellants have 3 choices – an informal review with the original agency decision-maker, an opportunity for mediation and finally an appeal to the next level of authority within the agency.

CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINT PROCESS

Any person, class or group of persons may file a discrimination complaint within 180 days of an alleged discriminatory action. Complaints may be filed in writing or orally with the agency head, any designated agency official or the Secretary of Agriculture, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. Assistance in filing a complaint can be obtained by calling or visiting any FSA office.

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.