

March 2013



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Imperial County FSA Updates

DEAR PRODUCERS: Welcome to the new GovDelivery bulletins and updates service from your Name County FSA office. Note that you are welcome to request to receive bulletins from more than one state and/or county and can add or remove individual subscriptions at any time.

Imperial County FSA Office

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Gilberto Gonzalez, Vice Chair
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County Executive Director:

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Program Technicians:

Carmen Perez
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DCP/ACRE Sign-ups Continue

DCP and ACRE signups for the 2013 crops are on-going. The DCP sign-up period will end on Aug. 2, 2013; and the ACRE sign-up period will end on June 3, 2013.

The 2013 DCP and ACRE program provisions are unchanged from 2012, except that all eligible participants in 2013 may choose to enroll in either DCP or ACRE for the 2013 crop year. This means that eligible producers who were enrolled in ACRE in 2012 may elect to enroll in DCP in 2013 or may re-enroll in ACRE in 2013. Likewise producers who were enrolled in DCP may opt for ACRE enrollment.

Contact your County FSA Office for additional information.

Next Acreage Reporting Deadline-March 15

Filing an accurate and timely acreage report for all crops, commodities and land uses can prevent loss of benefits for FSA programs including Commodity (DCP/ACRE); Loans & LDP's and NAP. The next acreage reporting deadline is MARCH 15 for small grains. In July 2012, many FSA acreage reporting dates changed. 2013 acreage reporting deadlines are as follows:

DEC 15, 2012: Perennial Forage (alfalfa, bermuda, klein, etc) and potatoes
JAN 02 2013: Honey
JAN 15: Sugar Beets, all citrus
MARCH 15: Small Grains
MAY 15: Table Grapes
MAY 31: Nursery
JULY 15: Corn, Cotton, Onions, Safflower, Sudan, Tomatoes and all other crops not included in prior reporting dates.

If you haven't reported your crops, please contact this office to arrange an appointment to do so.

Hispanic and Women Farmers and Ranchers Claim Period Ends March 25th

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack reminds Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA in past decades that the filing period will close March 25, 2013.

USDA urges potential claimants to contact the Claims Administrator for information and mail their claim packages on or before 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 his or her application 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.

Claimants may register for a claims package by calling the telephone number below Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Time or by downloading the forms from the website.

Website: www.farmerclaims.gov

Phone: 1-888-508-4429

Claims Period: September 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.

Honey Loans Available

Honey loans are a type of marketing assistance loan and they are available until April 1, 2013. The national loan rate for honey is \$.69 per pound. Market prices currently exceed the loan rate, so LDPs are not available at this time.

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. Producers are responsible for maintaining the quality of farm-stored honey during the term of the loan.

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 the loans can be disbursed.

Honey used as collateral may not be disposed of without approval of the county office staff.

Microloan Program

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) developed the Microloan (ML) program to better serve the unique financial operating needs of beginning, niche and small family farm operations.

FSA offers applicants a Microloan designed to help farmers with credit needs of \$35,000 or less. The loan features a streamlined application process built to fit the needs of new and smaller producers. This loan program will also be useful to specialty crop producers and operators of community supported agriculture (CSA).

Eligible applicants can apply for a maximum amount of \$35,000 to pay for initial start-up expenses such as hoop houses to extend the growing season, essential tools, irrigation and annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents, marketing, and distribution expenses. As financing needs increase, applicants can apply for a regular operating loan up to the maximum amount of \$300,000 or obtain financing from a commercial lender

under FSA's Guaranteed Loan Program.

Individuals interested in applying for a microloan or who would like to discuss other farm loan programs available, should contact Tom Hunton, Farm Loan Officer, in the Kern County FSA office to setup an appointment. His phone number is (661) 336-0967 ext. 116.

Over-The-Counter Check Conversion

Effective immediately, the Imperial County FSA Office will be using a new system to process checks/payments received. When a check is provided as payment, you authorize FSA staff to either use the information from your check to make a one-time electronic funds transfer from your account or to process the payment as a check transaction. When using the information from your check to make an electronic funds transfer, funds may be withdrawn from your account as soon as the same day you make your payment.

Important Dates

MARCH 15 - SMALL GRAINS ACREAGE REPORTING DEADLINE

MARCH 25 - CLAIMS PERIOD END DATE FOR HISPANIC & WOMEN FARMER/RANCHER CLAIMANTS

APRIL 1 - DEADLINE TO APPLY FOR HONEY LOAN

JUNE 3 - ACRE SIGN-UP PERIOD ENDS

AUGUST 2 - DCP SIGN-UP PERIOD ENDS

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9450, or call toll-free at (866) 632-9992 (English) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (English Federal-relay) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Federal-relay).
