

April 2013



Kings County FSA Updates

Kings County FSA Office

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Farm Loan Team Members:
(located in Visalia FSA Office)
Tom Roberts
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Office Hours:
8:00 AM - 4:30 PM
Monday - Friday

Website:
www.fsa.usda.gov

DCP/ACRE Sign-ups Continue

Direct and Counter Cyclical Program (DCP) and Average Crop Revenue Election (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. Please call the office for an appointment if you have not already enrolled.

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 a Farm Loan Team member in the Visalia County FSA office to setup an appointment. The phone number is (559) 734-8732 Ext 2.



Kings County Declared Disaster County Due To Drought

On March 13, 2013, the U S Department of Agriculture designated Kings County in California as a primary natural disaster area due to damages and losses caused by the ongoing drought. Farmers and ranchers in counties contiguous to primary disaster counties are also eligible to apply for natural disaster assistance. These counties include: Fresno, Kern, Monterey, San Luis Obispo and Tulare. Producers in the primary and contiguous counties listed previously are all eligible to apply for low interest emergency (EM) loans from the Farm Service Agency. Each application will be considered on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. Farmers and ranchers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses. For additional information regarding the Emergency Loan Program, please contact the Farm Loan Team located in the Visalia Office. The phone number is (559) 734-8732. Additional information online regarding disaster programs is available at <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>



Prevented Planting or Failed Crops

The CCC-576, Notice of Loss form is used to report failed and prevented planting acreage and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. Timely filing a Notice of Loss is required for ALL CROPS INCLUDING GRASSES. For losses on crops covered by the Non Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and crop insurance, you must file a CCC-576 (notice of loss) in the FSA County Office **within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent**. If filing for prevented planting, an acreage report and CCC-576, must be filed **within 15 calendar days** of the final planting date for the crop in order to be considered timely. Acreage reports must also be updated to show the location of the failed or prevented crop.



Producers must establish that all cropland feasible to plant but prevented from being planted was affected by a natural disaster rather than a management decision. Preliminary efforts made by the producer to plant the crop must be evident, such as disking the land, arranging for seed/fertilizer delivery or financing documents.

Hispanic and Women Farmers and Ranchers Claims Process Extended

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has announced the extension of the voluntary claims process for Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA in past decades. All claims must now be filed by **May 1, 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. 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.

Phone: 1-888-508-4429

Fax: (855) 626-8343

Email: claims@hwfr.org

Website: www.farmerclaims.gov

Claims Period: September 24, 2012 – May 1, 2013

Claim packages and other documentation may be mailed to Hispanic and Women Farmers and Ranchers Claims Administrator, PO Box 4540, Portland, OR 97208-4540. Claim packages and other documentation may also be emailed to claims@hwfr.org. Claimants may also fax claims packages and other documentation to (855) 626-8343. Completed forms and documentation must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. PDT on May 1, 2013.

Acreage Certification

Acreage reports are required for many Farm Service Agency programs. After spring planting, producers should certify their 2013 acreage. Filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs. Failed acreage must be reported within 15 days of the disaster event and before disposition of the crop. Prevented planting must be reported no later than 15 days after the final planting date. In order to provide producers with better customer service, we request that you call to schedule an appointment prior to visiting the office.

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).
