



NEWSLETTER



2011 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE)

November 2012

Sonoma-Marin County

FSA Office

1301 Redwood Way Ste 190
Petaluma, CA 94954
707-664-8593 phone
707-794-7902 fax
www.fsa.usda.gov/CA

Hours

Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

COC Scheduled Meeting

2nd Tuesday at 10:00 am

County Committee

Richard Grossi, LAA1
Chairperson
Phil Dolcini, LAA3
Vice Chairperson
Jeff Jones, LAA 4
Member
Diane Starkey LAA 5
Member
Victoria Mulas. LAA 2
Member
Tito Sasaki,
Advisor

Sonoma/Marin County Staff

Lisa V. Velasquez
County Executive Director
lisa.velasquez@usda.gov

Cecilia Medina
Program Technician
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Farm Loan Officer
Karri Bartolomei
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The sign-up period for the 2011 crop year Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) program will open October 22, 2012.

Please call for your packet, to determine if you are eligible to participate. Once you are determined that you will qualify, you will be called for an appointment to sign your application. Contact the office at 707-664-8593.

Under the 2008 Farm Bill, SURE authorizes assistance to farmers and ranchers who suffered crop losses caused by natural disasters occurring through September 30, 2011.

To be eligible for SURE, a farm or ranch must have at least a 10-percent production loss on a crop of economic significance; a policy or plan of insurance under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for all economically significant crops; and have been located in a county that was declared a primary disaster county or contiguous county by the Secretary of Agriculture. Without a Secretarial Disaster Designation, individual producers may be eligible if the actual production on the farm is less than 50 percent of the normal production due to a natural disaster.

Producers considered socially disadvantaged, a beginning farmer or rancher, or a limited resource farmer may be eligible for SURE without a policy or plan of insurance or NAP coverage.

Farmers and ranchers interested in signing up must do so before the **June 7, 2013** deadline. For more information on the 2011 SURE program, visit any FSA county office or www.fsa.usda.gov/sure

USDA Makes Changes To Help With Drought Crisis

The Risk Management Agency (RMA) has announced another helpful change that livestock producers will appreciate. For the 2012 crop year, RMA will allow haying and grazing of cover crops without affecting the insurability of planted 2013 spring crops. This means farmers and ranchers can plant a cover crop without foregoing crop insurance coverage in 2013, thus giving producers another opportunity to grow needed forage and feed for this fall and winter. However, before making any plans to plant crop cover, producers should consult with their insurance agent.

Another change was the commitment from the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to change the emergency loan program so that farmers and ranchers are eligible to apply earlier in the disaster recovery process. With this change, producers are no longer required to wait until the end of the production cycle to obtain a loan. That means livestock producers needing assistance today to offset increased feed costs don't have to wait.

For more information on this program or other issues, just contact the FSA office located in your local USDA Service Center.

Preventing Fraud

The Farm Service Agency supports the Risk Management Agency in the prevention of fraud, waste and abuse of the Federal Crop Insurance Program. FSA has been, and will continue to, assist RMA and insurance providers by monitoring crop conditions throughout the growing season. FSA will continue to refer all suspected cases of fraud, waste and abuse directly to RMA. Producers can report suspected cases to the FSA office, RMA, or the Office of the Inspector General.

Staff Changes:

Debbie Castle, Program Technician in Petaluma is no longer working in the Petaluma Office, she has moved on to a new position as a County Executive Director in New Haven, CT. We all wish her well.

NAP Loss Filing

The CCC-576, Notice of Loss, is used to report failed acreage and prevented planting and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. Timely submission of 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 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.

County Committee Elections

Watch your mailbox for your official county office committee election ballot starting early next month. Ballots will be mailed to all eligible voters on Nov. 5, 2012. If you don't receive a ballot, contact our office at 707-664-8593 ext 2. Completed and signed ballots must be returned to the county office by close of business on Dec.3, 2012.

Hispanic and Women Discrimination Claims

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

Hispanic and women farmers who believe they have faced discriminatory practices from the USDA must file a claim by March 25, 2013 in order to have a chance to receive a cash payment or loan forgiveness. The opening of this claims process is part of USDA's ongoing efforts to correct the wrongs of the past and ensure fair treatment to all current and future customers.

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: 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.

Sonoma-Marin Harvest Guide

The Farm Service Agency is distributing copies of our Harvest Guide at outreach events and other opportunities. The Harvest Guide promotes producers that have established a brand name available in stores or who direct market their crops to the public as part of the "Know your Farmer, Know your food" campaign. We are continuously updating the information in the Harvest Guide and if you would like to be included please contact the Sonoma-Marin FSA and ask for more information (707)- (664-8593).

FSA Farm Loans

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 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 have a maximum limit of \$1,214,000. 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. To find out more about FSA loan programs, contact the county office staff.

Youth Loans

FSA 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 \$5000.

Stop by the county office for details and help preparing and processing the application forms. The FSA staff can help you with questions you may have about a particular program

AFIDA – Foreign Investor Disclosure

Any foreign person who acquires, transfers or holds any interest, other than a security interest, in agricultural land in the United States is required by law to report the transaction no later than 90 days after the date of the transaction. They must file Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) reports with the FSA county office that maintains reports for the county where the land is located.

For AFIDA purposes, agricultural land is

defined as any land used for farming, ranching or timber production, if the tracts total 10 acres or more. For more information regarding AFIDA and FSA programs, contact the FSA office near you or visit the USDA Web site at <http://www.usda.gov>.

2012 DCP Final Payments

DCP payments for 2012 will be issued after Oct. 1, 2012. These payments will be deposited directly into participating producers' bank accounts. If there are any unearned payments, Commodity Credit Corporation will automatically subtract those amounts from the October Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program payments.

2013 Reporting of Fall Seeded Crops

All producers are reminded that the acreage reporting dates for fall seeded crops has changed, beginning with the crop planted for 2013 harvest. The new acreage reporting date is December 15, 2012. This applies to all fall seeded crops including winter wheat. Please call our office at 707-664-8593 ext 2 for an appointment to certify your fall seeded crops.

2013 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. If an owner or operator cannot agree about program participation, like in the case of DCP program, then producers should inquire about a reconstitution of the farm at the local FSA office.

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 1, 2013, for farms enrolled in specific programs.

Dates to Remember	
October 8, 2012	Federal Holiday. FSA Offices are closed.
October 22, 2012	2011 SURE Sign Up Begins
November 12, 2012	Federal Holiday. FSA Offices are closed.
November 22, 2012	Federal Holiday. FSA Offices are closed.
December 1, 2012	Last day to pay NAP fees for onions
December 1, 2012	Last day to pay NAP fees for grazing crops (including native pasture or rangeland) and hay (including grass hay; mixed hay; grain hay; etc.)
December 1, 2012	Last day to pay NAP fees for honey
December 3, 2012	Last day to return COC election ballots to the County Office
December 15, 2012	Last day to complete acreage reports for perennial forage, regardless of use (including clover, timothy grass, orchard grass; perennial rye, etc)
December 15, 2012	Last day to pay NAP fees for asparagus, artichokes, herbs, strawberries, cane berries, fruit tree and nut tree crops
December 25, 2012	Federal Holiday. FSA Offices are closed.
January 1, 2013	Federal Holiday. FSA Offices are closed.
January 2, 2013	Last day to complete acreage/hive or colony report for honey.
January 15, 2013	Last day to complete acreage reports for citrus, avocados, strawberries and sugar beets.
January 31, 2013	Last day to pay NAP fees for apples.
March 1, 2013	Last day to pay NAP fees for annually planted spring crops.
March 15, 2012	Last day to complete acreage reports for fall-seeded wheat, oats, barley, alfalfa seed, fruit tree crops and nut tree crops.

2013 NAP Fee Waiver if you qualify as a Limited Resource Producer

Limited resource producers may request a waiver of service fees. To qualify for an administrative service fee waiver, the producer must meet both of the following criteria:

- earn no more than \$100,000 gross income in farm sales from each of the previous two years (to be increased starting in FY 2009 to adjust for the inflation using price paid by farmer index as compiled by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS));
- have a total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of four, or less than 50 percent of county median household in both of the previous two years.

Limited resource producer status can be determined using the USDA Limited Resource Farmer and Rancher Online Self Determination Tool at <http://www.lrfTool.sc.egov.usda.gov/tool.asp> The automated system calculates and displays adjusted gross farm sales per year and the higher of the national poverty level or county median household income.

Call the office to see if you qualify 707-664-8593.

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