

April 2015

USDA e-News

California Edition



United States Department of Agriculture

Welcome to USDA e-News, California Edition, a multi-agency newsletter providing California's producers and other interested parties with current information.

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Featured Item

USDA Seeks Nominees for Lamb Board

USDA is seeking nominations for individuals to serve on the American Lamb Board. Any producer, feeder, or first handler within the United States that owns or purchases lambs can be considered for nomination. All eligible individuals are invited to seek nominations by May 1, 2015. A lamb producer, feeder, seedstock producer, or first handler must be nominated by USDA Certified Nominating Organizations. Each nominee must complete and submit all applicable forms. USDA encourages board membership that reflects the diversity of the individuals served by its industry. Diversity includes gender, race, disability, length of service, and size and type of operation. For more information on board nominations and to locate the USDA Certified Nominating Organization in your state or region visit: www.ams.usda.gov/LambNominationInformation.

Updates

Deadline Extended for Important Safety Net Programs

USDA has extended the deadline to update yield history or reallocate base acres for Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs to **April 7, 2015**. The final day for producers to make a one-time election of either ARC or PLC for the 2014 through 2018 crop years is also **April 7, 2015**. ARC and PLC, established in the 2014 Farm Bill, are designed to help producers better manage risk. Producers will begin signing contracts for 2014 and 2015 crop years in mid-April through the summer. Additional information on the programs and new online tools to help with the decision process are available at www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

[Crop Insurance and Conservation Compliance Requirements](#)

USDA reminds producers that the 2014 Farm Bill requires them to have a Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation Certification (AD-1026) on file. The Farm Bill relinked highly erodible land conservation and wetland conservation compliance with eligibility for premium support paid under the federal crop insurance program. For farmers to be eligible for premium support on their federal crop insurance, a completed and signed AD-1026 form must be on file with the FSA. Since many FSA and NRCS programs have this requirement, most producers should already have an AD-1026 on file. If producers have not filed, they must do so by **June 1, 2015**. More information is available on [RMA website](#) and [NRCS website](#).

[Sales Closing Date Nears for Crop Insurance Programs](#)

USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) reminds producers that the final dates to apply for crop insurance on most insurable spring-planted crops are fast approaching. Producers need to purchase, review, or modify their crop insurance policies before these sales closing dates have passed. Crop insurance provides protection against crop production losses due to natural perils such as drought, hail, and excessive moisture. Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers and online at the RMA [Agent Locator](#).

[USDA Organic Survey Continues into April](#)

USDA's Organic Survey to gather detailed data on U.S. organic agriculture production is still ongoing. The survey looks at many aspects of organic agriculture during the 2014 calendar year including production and marketing practices, to income and expenses. It also focuses on the future of organic production by including producers transitioning to certified organic agriculture. Online forms are still accepted until **April 3, 2015**. For more information about the Organic Survey, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov.

[Census of Horticultural Specialties & Floriculture Continues](#)

Enumerators are still collecting data for the 2014 Census of Horticultural Specialties to gather detailed information on horticultural production and sales in California. Producers can fill out the form online at www.agcensus.usda.gov, or return their form by mail. NASS will publish the Census of Horticulture results in December 2015 and the annual *Floriculture Crops* report on June 4, 2015. For more information about the Census of Horticulture, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov or call Curt Stock in the Pacific Regional Field Office at 916-498-5161.

[Funding Opportunities](#)

[Energy Grants Can Assist Producers with Drought Related Projects](#)

USDA Rural Development's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) can help with a variety of energy efficiency and renewable energy projects – including those to assist with the impacts of California's drought. Efficient irrigation pumps, diesel motor replacement and solar panels are all eligible uses of REAP funds. Grants can cover up to 25% of the project cost up to \$500,000, and loan guarantees for up to 75% of the project cost up to \$25 million are available depending on the project. The first funding deadline is **April 30, 2015**. More information is available on

[Rural Development's website](#) or by contacting [Steven Nicholls](#) at 530-792-5805 or [Lupe Valdes](#) at 209-722-4119 ext. 119.

Funds Available for Farm Labor Housing

USDA Rural Development is now accepting pre-applications for Farm Labor Housing (FLH) loans and grants to construct new off-farm units or purchase and rehabilitate existing non-FLH properties. Nationally, there is \$26.6 million available in loans and grants. Complete details are available in the March 25 [Federal Register notice](#) or on Rural Development's [website](#). Pre-applications are **due by June 23, 2015**. Questions can be directed to [Debra Moreton](#) at 530-885-6505 ext. 109.

Farm to School Grant Program

The purpose of the USDA [Farm to School Grant Program](#) is to assist eligible entities in implementing farm to school programs that improve access to local foods in eligible schools. The request for application (RFA) for FY2016 funding is now available! Find the press release [here](#). Click [here](#) to see the RFA and be sure to check out our application guidance [here](#).

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands and their related benefits. The 2014 Farm Bill consolidated three previous conservation easement programs into ACEP to make it easier for diverse agricultural landowners to fully benefit from conservation initiatives. Under the Agricultural Land Easements component, NRCS helps Indian tribes, state and local governments and non-governmental organizations protect working agricultural lands and limit non-agricultural uses of the land. Under the Wetlands Reserve Easements component, NRCS helps to restore, protect and enhance enrolled wetlands. For more information please see the [webpage](#).

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) moves to Continuous Funding Model

To help support a continuous sign-up, planning and obligation process, applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) are now accepted year-round, and will be evaluated for funding based on the FY2015 batching schedule. Funds will be distributed according to an allocation schedule that will provide a source of funding for each of the designated batching periods. Applicants may apply for NRCS programs at any time during the year. Application batching periods will close on the third Friday of the month according to the batching period schedule below:

- Batching Period 3 – April 17, 2015
- Batching Period 4 – June 19, 2015
- Batching Period 5 – July 17, 2015

NASS Reports

- [Crop Production](#) (04/10/2015)
- [Grape Acreage Report](#) (4/14/2015)
- [Fruit & Nut Review](#) (04/17/2015)

- [Field Crop Review](#) (04/17/2015)
- [Almond Acreage Report](#) (4/23/2015)
- [Livestock Review](#) (04/29/2015)
- [Poultry Report](#) (04/29/2015)

Other Activities & Events

New Farmers, We're Here for You

New and beginning farmers and ranchers are as diverse as American agriculture itself. New farmers are growing traditional crops and new varieties, organic produce and heirloom products. They are part of row-crop farms - employing cutting-edge technology and equipment - and community supported agriculture programs - delivering fresh products directly to their neighbors. They are raising beef, pork, dairy cattle, poultry, and fish on operations of every size. This web site is just the beginning. [What will you find here?](#)

Elections for Administrative Committee for Pistachios

The Administrative Committee for Pistachios (Committee), which administers the Federal marketing order for pistachios grown in California, Arizona and New Mexico, is conducting elections to seat new members for the term of office that expires on June 30, 2017. The positions to be filled include five producer members; two each in District 1 and District 2, and one in District 4, and their alternate producer members. In addition to the producer member positions, a handler member and that member's alternate position also need to be filled. The handler position can be filled by a handler from any of the four Districts covered by the Federal marketing order. The Department of Agriculture (USDA), which oversees the administration of the marketing order, is working with the Committee to enhance the diversity of the Committee and is encouraging eligible women, minorities, and people with disabilities to consider running for office. If you would like more information on the marketing order or the nomination and election process, please contact Bob Klein, Manager of the Committee, at (559) 255-6480, or Andrea Ricci, USDA, at (559) 487-5901.

Elections for the California Walnut Board

The California Walnut Board (Board), which locally administers the Federal marketing order for California walnuts, is conducting elections to seat new members for the term of office that expires on August 31, 2017. The Department of Agriculture (USDA), which oversees the administration of the marketing order, would like to encourage all growers and handlers to participate in the Board elections. In an effort to enhance the diversity of the Board, USDA encourages eligible women, minorities, and people with disabilities to seek position on the Board. If you would like more information on the marketing order or the nomination and election process, please contact Dennis Balint, Executive Director of the Board, at (916) 932-7070, or Andrea Ricci, USDA, at (559) 487-5901.

About Us

Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)

- [Find a Program](#)

Farm Service Agency (FSA)

- [When Disaster Strikes](#)
- [Managing Credit Needs](#)
- [Commodity Support](#)
- [Direct/Counter-Cyclical and Revenue Programs](#)
- [Energy](#)
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Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

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- [Financial Assistance and Easement Programs](#)

National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)

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- [Agriculture Surveys](#)

Risk Management Agency (RMA)

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- [Risk Management Education & Outreach](#)

Rural Development (RD)

- [Overview of Programs](#)

Contact Us

If you would like to receive a copy of future newsletters or if you have relevant information for California producers that you want to include in a future issue of this newsletter, please email one of the contacts listed below. Please be advised that not all activities may be published.

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