

January 2016

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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Updates

Notice of Damage

With the prediction of an “El Niño” winter comes the possibility of damages and losses to crops. USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) remind insured producers that a written notice of damage or loss of production is to be filed **within 72 hours of initial discovery** of damage or loss of production. This also applies to producers enrolled in the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program. These notifications provide the opportunity for the insurance provider to inspect the crop and determine the extent of damage or potential production before the crop is harvested or otherwise disposed of. In the event of damage or loss, producers should contact either their insurance agent or [local FSA office](#) as appropriate.

2016 Conservation Easement Applications due January 15

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in California is now accepting applications for both Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE) and Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) through the [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program \(ACEP\)](#). Created in the 2014 Farm Bill, the program encompasses protection of farms and ranches through ALE and protection and restoration of wetlands through WRE. Applications for available funding are **due no later than January 15, 2016**. Interested landowners are encouraged to contact their [local NRCS service center](#).

January Crop Insurance Deadlines

USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) reminds producers that the final dates to apply for crop insurance are fast approaching. The last day to purchase or change your policy is **January 31, 2016** for the following crops: Apples, Apricots, Cherries, Grapes, Nectarines, Olives, Peaches, Pears, Pecans, Plums, Potatoes, Prunes, Table Grapes, Tomatoes, and Walnuts. 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. In order to receive premium subsidies, the insured must certify that they meet [Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation](#) requirements (AD-1026) with Farm Service Agency (FSA). For more information contact your agent or you can find an agent online at the RMA [Agent Locator](#).

Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Deadlines

2016 NAP Application Closing dates for apples is **January 31, 2016**. Please make sure to file an Application for Coverage and pay the service fee for your crop policy. For more information, please contact your [local FSA Office](#).

Conservation Reserve Program Enrollment Deadline

The next general enrollment period for the [Conservation Reserve Program \(CRP\)](#) began December 1, 2015, and ends on **February 26, 2016**. December 2015 also marked the 30th anniversary of CRP, a federally funded program that assists agricultural producers with the cost of restoring, enhancing and protecting certain grasses, shrubs and trees to improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and reduce loss of wildlife habitat.

Whole Farm Revenue Protection Program Updates

A reminder that [Whole Farm Revenue Protection \(WFRP\)](#), a new revenue insurance program that provides coverage for the entire farm under one insurance policy, has been expanded to all counties in California for the 2016 crop year with a sales closing date of **February 28, 2016**. Program changes make it available to more growers.

California Rice Growers Have New Insurance Option

[Margin Protection](#), a new pilot insurance program for the 2016 crop year, will be available to rice growers in Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Tehama, Yolo and Yuba counties with a sales closing date of **February 28, 2016**. Margin Protection provides producers with a full package of risk coverage that include protection against a decline in harvest price, yield loss and cost increases or any combination thereof. The program is area-based, using county-level estimates of costs to establish the amount of coverage and indemnity payments. It can be purchased by itself, or in conjunction with other rice insurance policies. Growers are advised to ask their agent for further details.

USDA Improves Access to Farm Loans for Tribal Farmlands

USDA recently announced that it is expanding the availability of farm loans for Indian tribes and members to purchase tribal farmland that has multiple owners. The [improved lending opportunities](#) are possible due to new authority granted by the 2014 Farm Bill, which allows

USDA to provide revolving loan funds to qualified intermediary lenders that can relend the funds to qualified tribes and individuals. The program **became available December 1, 2015**.

USDA Enrollment Period Begins for Safety Net Coverage in 2016

Producers who chose safety-net coverage from Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, can visit FSA county offices to sign contracts to [enroll in coverage](#) for 2016. The enrollment period will continue until **August 1, 2016**.

\$40 Million Available to Help Ranchers Restore Sage Grouse Habitat

USDA [announced](#) the availability of \$40 million to help ranchers and other partners in 11 western states restore and protect sagebrush habitat for greater sage-grouse on privately-owned land. This investment is part of USDA's four-year, \$211 million [Sage Grouse Initiative 2.0](#) through the Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW) partnership. The WLFW partnership uses seven focus species, including sage grouse, to steer public and private conservation investments that improve struggling landscapes and strengthen agricultural operations. NRCS financial assistance covers part of the cost to implement conservation practices. Interested landowners are encouraged to contact their [local NRCS office](#).

USDA Removes Farm Program Payments to Non-Active Farm Managers

USDA recently [finalized a rule](#) to ensure that farm safety-net payments are issued only to active managers of farms that operate as joint ventures or general partnerships, consistent with the direction and authority provide by Congress in the 2014 Farm Bill. The action, which exempts family farm operations, closes a loophole where individuals who were not actively part of farm management still received payments.

USDA Southwest Regional Climate Hub Updates

The USDA Southwest Regional Climate Hub is one of seven hubs in the nation, headquartered in Las Cruces, New Mexico. These regional hubs address risks such as fires, floods, droughts and invasive pests on a regional basis, and translate their research into resource management tools for ag producers. In addition to these efforts, a Southwest Sub Hub has been established in Davis to focus on specialty crops and Southwest forests. Those interested in receiving regular updates from the Regional Climate Hub can [sign up online](#) to receive the Southwest Climate Hub Bulletin.

California Almond Board Seeking New Board Members

The Almond Board of California (Board), which locally administers the Federal marketing order for California almonds, will conduct elections in early 2016 to seat new members for the term of office beginning on March 1, 2016. USDA, which oversees the administration of the marketing order, encourages all eligible handlers and growers to participate in Board elections. In an effort to enhance the diversity of the Board, USDA also encourages women, minorities, and people with disabilities to seek positions on the Board. Please direct questions to Andrea Ricci, USDA Marketing Specialist at 559-487-5901.

Funding Opportunities

Deadlines Approaching for Disaster Assistance Programs

Farm Service Agency (FSA) has a variety of programs available to help farmers and ranchers impacted by disasters, including the state's drought and wildfires. Click on the programs below for additional details, or visit the FSA [Disaster Assistance Program website](#).

- [Livestock Forage Disaster Program \(LFP\)](#) provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who have suffered grazing losses due to drought or fire. **Sign-up ends on January 30, 2016.**
- [Livestock Indemnity Program \(LIP\)](#) provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who have suffered livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law, including wolves and avian predators. **Sign-up ends on January 30, 2016.**
- [Tree Assistance Program \(TAP\)](#) provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines damaged by natural disasters. **Sign-up ends on January 30, 2016.**
- [Farm Storage Facility Loan Program \(FSFL\)](#) provides low-interest financing for producers to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities. The program was enhanced to include 23 new categories of eligible equipment for fruit and vegetable producers, and makes it easier for farmers and ranchers around the country to finance the equipment they need to grow and expand. The maximum loan amount is \$500,000.

Catastrophic Fire Recovery Assistance

NRCS reminds producers and non-industrial private forestland owners about Environmental Quality Incentives Program's (EQIP) Catastrophic Fire Recovery assistance, which can provide immediate resource protection in areas burned by catastrophic fires in the past 18 months. Priority resource concerns for the EQIP Catastrophic Fire Recovery include immediate soil erosion protection, minimizing noxious and invasive plant proliferation, protecting water quality, and restoring livestock infrastructure necessary for grazing management on Forestland and Rangeland. Additional details are available [online](#) or by contacting your [local NRCS office](#).

Reports and Publications

California Horticulture Leads Nation, Floriculture Survey Underway

California leads the nation with \$2.88 billion in horticulture sales, according to the [2014 Census of Horticultural Specialties](#) report released by USDA NASS in December. Of the \$13.8 billion total horticultural sales in the U.S., 21 percent were from California. Some operators who contributed to the Census of Horticultural Specialties report recently received the Floriculture Survey questionnaire. Respondents are encouraged to return their Floriculture surveys as soon as possible via mail, or use the convenient [Online Survey Response site](#). The Floriculture Survey results will be published in the spring of this year. For more information, visit www.nass.usda.gov/ca or call Curt Stock in the Pacific Regional Field Office at 916-498-8935.

2015 Certified Organic Survey Coming Soon

USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) recently reported that organic farms sold a total of \$5.5 billion in organic products in 2014, up 72 percent since 2008. California alone accounted for 41 percent of all organic sales in 2014. NASS is now conducting the 2015 Certified Organic Survey to provide more data for the industry. This information will be used to help determine programs, research, and support to better meet the needs of organic agriculture producers in California and the U.S. For more information, visit www.nass.usda.gov/ca or call Curt Stock in the Pacific Regional Field Office at 916-498-8935.

Grape Crush Data Collection Deadline is January 8

The 2015 Grape Crush survey deadline is approaching. A paper workbook was mailed mid-November and the [electronic workbook](#) was made available for filing online. Most operations use the electronic workbook and submit it to nass-gcrush@nass.usda.gov for rapid processing. Workbooks must be submitted by **January 8, 2016**. A Preliminary Report will be published February 10, 2016 and a Final Report will be available March 10, 2016. To find out more, email nass-gcrush@nass.usda.gov or contact Lena Schwedler at the California NASS office at 1-800-851-1127.

California County Agricultural Commissioners' Reports Online Now

The 2013-2014 California County Agricultural Commissioners' Reports are available online now at www.nass.usda.gov/ca. The publication provides detailed annual data available on agricultural production by county. Data products include a PDF of the complete report, an .xlsx file, and .csv format for [download](#) at no additional charge. Basic data collected by the Agricultural Commissioners and their staff members are compiled from many sources. Sources vary from county to county. Copies of individual county reports may be requested or obtained directly from each [County Agricultural Commissioner's office](#).

Nationwide Conservation Survey Ongoing

USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is contacting more than 600 California farmers and ranchers as part of the Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP). CEAP measures the environmental benefits associated with implementation and installation of conservation practices on cultivated and non-cultivated agricultural lands, according to USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the lead agency for the project. NASS conducts the survey for CEAP under a cooperative agreement with NRCS. For more information, visit www.nass.usda.gov/ca or call Curt Stock in the Pacific Regional Field Office at 916-498-8935.

ARMS Phase II and Fruit Chemical Use Surveys Continue

Enumerators continue to collect data for the ARMS Phase II (Cotton Production Practices and Costs Report) and Fruit Chemical Use surveys to gather detailed information on farming in California. NASS will continue data collection for these three surveys through the beginning of the New Year. For more information, visit www.nass.usda.gov/ca or call Curt Stock in the Pacific Regional Field Office at 916-498-8935.

NASS Reports

[Crop Production](#) (1/12/2016)

[Processing Tomato Report](#) (1/14/2016)

[Freestone Peach Freezer and Dehydrator Report](#) (1/14/2016)
[Olive Inventory](#) (1/21/2016)
[Fruit & Nut Review](#) (1/27/2016)
[Livestock Review](#) (1/27/2016)
[Field Crop Review](#) (1/28/2016)
[Poultry Report](#) (1/28/2016)

Other Activities and Events

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Farm Service Agency (FSA)

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Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

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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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