

# USDA e-News California Edition

Vol.3  
March 2011

A multi-agency newsletter providing California's producers and other interested parties with current information from the following agencies:



Farm Service Agency

Natural Resources Conservation Service

National Agricultural Statistic Services

Risk Management Agency

Rural Development

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## Agency Overview

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Natural

Welcome to USDA e-News, California Edition. Our goal is to raise awareness of USDA programs and resources available for California's agriculture producers and those who support them. For more information about a specific USDA program please contact the respective agency representatives listed below or visit our web links.

## Workshops & Training

### California Small Farm Conference

March 6-8, 2011 - San Jose

Don't miss the State's premier educational conference on topics relevant to family farming, direct marketing and issues related to agricultural sustainability for smaller farms and ranches! The 3-day conference includes an array of field courses, several workshop series, and lots of networking opportunities. Registration fees are quite affordable thanks to USDA's support and partner sponsorships. **More information is available on the conference [website](#).**

### San Joaquin Valley Winegrowers Association - Tailgate Series

March 9-11 - Location TBA

Informal meetings with presentations from business and educational professionals will focus on three major areas: production management, crop marketing, and financial risk. Partially funded by the Risk Management Agency. For more information visit <http://www.idrinkwine.net/index.htm>.

### Farmer-Veteran Coalition

March 25-26 - Los Angeles

This two-day educational event, partially funded by the USDA Risk Management Agency, is free for all veterans and active-duty military personnel who are interested in farming or who are currently farming. The event will include a tour of a wholesale produce market, a culinary academy, urban farming and a chance to help *Teaching Garden*, a southern California-based project that establishes edible gardens at many of the nation's poorest schools. Due to limited space, preference will be given to those who have demonstrated the most serious interest in pursuing food or farming careers, and to post- 9/11 veterans who are at the start of their new careers. Veterans interested in attending or finding out about services of the *Farmer-Veteran Coalition* are urged to contact [info@farmvetco.org](mailto:info@farmvetco.org).

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**Rural Development Job Forums**  
RD is hosting public forums in each county focusing on economic development issues. Please visit [www.rurdev.usda.gov/ca](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ca) for information on dates and locations.

**New Horizons for Conservation Cropping in California  
3 Sessions Offered**  
California's Conservation Tillage and Cropping Systems Workgroup is offering workshops on March 9<sup>th</sup> in Davis, on March 10<sup>th</sup> in Tulare, and on March 11<sup>th</sup> in Five Points. Innovative conservation tillage systems, which reduce overall tillage and soil disturbance, maintain surface residues and can reduce costs, will be showcased. For more information contact Jeff Mitchell at (209) 303-9689 or [Mitchell@uckac.edu](mailto:Mitchell@uckac.edu)

**New Programs/Initiatives**



Over 20,000 disabling injuries occur each year on California farms. CalAgrAbility, a statewide program funded by USDA, assists farmers, workers and their families who have injuries, illness or disabilities. Services include: on-site assessments, assistive technology research, educational workshops and training with agricultural agencies and health professionals, and more. CalAgrAbility has successfully collaborated with NRCS and FSA to provide farmers with essential services. For more information call 800-477-6129, email [calagra@ucdavis.edu](mailto:calagra@ucdavis.edu) or visit <http://calagrability.ucdavis.edu/>

CalAgrAbility is encouraging folks involved in farming to take advantage of two excellent webinar opportunities sponsored by AgriSafe: 1.) "Falls and Aging Farmers: Prevalence and Prevention," is on February 24<sup>th</sup> at 10-11 am PST. To register go to <http://uiowa.na5.acrobat.com/dreed/> and enter your name in the guest log-in, then click on 'Enter Room'. For more information contact [sjenkins@agrisafe.org](mailto:sjenkins@agrisafe.org). 2.) "Emergency Preparedness for Farmers, Ranchers and Other Rural Residents with Disabilities" is on February 24<sup>th</sup> at 12 noon PST. To participate in this National AgrAbility-sponsored training, email [agrability@agrability.org](mailto:agrability@agrability.org) by February 18<sup>th</sup> and put the word "Webinar" in the subject line. Questions? Call 800-825-4264.

**Updates**

**Sales Closing Dates for Federal Crop Insurance Programs are Nearing**  
Sales closing dates for several crop insurance programs are almost here. Please make sure to sign up, review, or change your crop policy before these dates have passed. *February 28<sup>th</sup>* is the last day to buy or change your policy for Corn, Dry Beans, Grain Sorghum, Cultivated Wild Rice (except for Yolo and Sutter Counties), Figs, and Rice. *March 15<sup>th</sup>* is the last day to buy or change your policy for Barley, Mint, Oats, Wheat and Potatoes. For more information contact your agent or you can find an agent on the [RMA website](#).

**Prospective Plantings to be collected and published in March**  
NASS will be collecting information on what farmers intend to plant this year, including acreage, in March. The [Prospective Plantings Report](#) will be published on March 31.

**On-Farm Renewable Energy Production**  
NASS will publish on February 23, 2011 the results of its first ever [On-Farm](#)

**[Renewable Energy Production survey](#)**. This survey gathered information about energy production on America's farms and ranches including the use of wind turbines, solar panels, anaerobic digesters and other alternative energy sources.

### **Farms, Land in Farms, Livestock Operations - Report Now Available**

NASS has now published its annual report on the number of farms, land in farms, and number of livestock farms. The report can be found [here](#).

### **TIP Net On-Line Tool Now Available**

This FSA-sponsored online tool helps link retiring farmers who have expiring Conservation Reserve Program contracts with beginning farmers or ranchers who are interested in bringing the land into production. Through the Transition Incentives Program (TIP), producers with land for sale or lease are introduced to qualified beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers who want to buy or rent land for their operations. For more info <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/tipnet>

## Funding Opportunities

### **Value-Added Producer Grant**

Funding notice for this program is expected to be published soon. Please visit the following website for updates: [http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP\\_VAPG\\_Grants.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_VAPG_Grants.html) Applications are due February 23<sup>rd</sup>. For more information, visit the [HUD Web site](#).

### **NRCS' On-Farm Energy Audits Help California Landowners Improve Energy Conservation and Efficiency**

Applications are being accepted through Feb. 25 to assist farmers and ranchers conduct on-farm energy audits to improve their overall energy efficiency. These audits help landowners understand their energy usage, and NRCS cost-share funding provides them opportunities to implement many of the recommendations from the audit which may include installing more energy efficient micro-irrigation systems and pumping. [More info](#) and [en Español](#).

### **Conservation Assistance Available For Organic Producers**

#### ***Interested producers need to apply by March 4, 2011***

California agricultural producers who are certified organic or who are transitioning to organic production may qualify for technical and financial assistance through a *National Organic Initiative* administered by NRCS. Over \$2.4 million will be available to eligible producers in California through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Approved applicants can receive up to \$20,000 per year, up to \$80,000 over six years. The assistance targets over two dozen core conservation practices, including conservation crop rotation, cover crop, nutrient management, pest management and prescribed grazing. Interested producers are encouraged to contact their local NRCS Service Center. [More info](#) and [en Español](#).

## Reports & Publications

**[On-Farm Renewable Energy Production survey](#)** (available February 23).

## Other Activities & Events

### **On-Farm Integrated Water Management Conference 2011 March 3-4, San Jose**

Learn about practical solutions for efficient, integrated and cost-effective agricultural water management at this USDA-sponsored event. Explore the management practices needed to get more "crop per drop". For more information

visit the [conference website](#).

## CONTACT US

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

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