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CDFA AND USDA HOST INFORMATIONAL SESSIONS ON DROUGHT RESOURCES FOR FARMERS, RANCHERS AND FARMWORKERS



Application deadlines for federal programs rapidly approaching

SACRAMENTO, February 12, 2014 – As California faces one of the driest years ever recorded, the California Department of Food and Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Agriculture will be holding informational sessions on drought resources for farmers, ranchers and farmworkers in several locations throughout the state in the coming weeks. These sessions will provide information on a variety of state and federal government programs designed to assist farmers with water conservation, crop insurance, and other on-farm management tools. Information on farmworker assistance programs will also be available.

Upcoming application deadlines for federal programs include crop insurance programs offered by the USDA's Risk Management Agency (February 28th); non-insured crop insurance offered by the USDA's Farm Service Agency (March 1st); and water conservation enhancements offered by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (March 3rd). These programs offer a variety on-farm assistance including cover crops and tree pruning as well as market-based risk management tools.

Informational sessions will be held on the following dates/locations:

February 18, 2014 - 6p.m. to 8p.m. (Redding/Palo Cedro)

Junction Elementary School – Theater Room
9087 Deschutes Road
Palo Cedro, CA 96073

February 19, 2014 – 6p.m. to 8p.m. (Salinas)

Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner's Office
1428 Abbott Street
Salinas, CA 93901

February 20, 2014 – 6p.m. to 8p.m. (Fresno)

Fresno County Farm Bureau

1274 W. Hedges Ave
Fresno, CA 93728

February 25, 2014 – 6p.m. to 8p.m. (Ventura/Camarillo)

Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner's Office
555 Airport Way, Suite E
Camarillo, CA 93010

February 26, 2014 – 6p.m. to 8p.m. (San Diego/Escondido)

San Diego County Farm Bureau
1670 E. Valley Parkway
Escondido, CA 9202

Several state/federal government entities will be represented at these information sessions, including: USDA Farm Service Agency; USDA Risk Management Agency; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; USDA Rural Development; the California Employment Development Department; and other community resources.

CDFA continues to support California's drought response. The department has developed a web page as an information clearinghouse on assistance programs for farmers, ranchers and farmworkers; will continue to work with California food banks to address drought-related impacts; and is working with the University of California to develop a real-time assessment of drought impacts in farming and ranching communities.

With California facing one of the most severe droughts on record, Governor Brown declared a [drought State of Emergency](#) last month and directed state officials to take all necessary actions to prepare for water shortages. Governor Brown has spoken with President Obama about crucial federal support during the ongoing drought, and the state [continues](#) to work with [federal partners](#) to ensure a [coordinated](#) drought response. The administration has also [expressed support](#) for federal legislation introduced by Senators Feinstein and Boxer and Representatives Jim Costa, Tony Cárdenas and Sam Farr.

Across state government, action is being taken. The Department of General Services is leading water [conservation efforts](#) at state facilities, and the Department of Transportation is cutting water usage along California's roadways by 50 percent. Caltrans has also launched a public awareness campaign, putting a water [conservation message](#) on their more than 700 electronic highway signs.

In January, the state took [action to conserve](#) water in numerous Northern California [reservoirs](#) to meet minimum needs for operations impacting the environment and the economy. The State Water Resources Control Board announced it would work with hydropower generators and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to [preserve water](#) in California reservoirs. Recently the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the California Fish and Game Commission [restricted fishing](#) on [some waterways](#) due to low water flows worsened by the drought.

The state is working to protect local communities from the dangers of extreme drought. The California Department of Public Health [identified](#) and offered [assistance](#) to communities at risk of severe drinking water shortages and is working with other state and local agencies to develop solutions for vulnerable communities. CAL FIRE hired [additional firefighters](#) and is continuously [adjusting staffing](#) throughout the state to help address the [increased fire threat](#) due to drought conditions. The California Department of Food and Agriculture launched a [drought website](#) to help farmers, ranchers and farmworkers find resources and assistance programs that may be available to them during the drought.

Even as the state deals with the immediate impacts of the drought, it's also planning for the future. Recently, the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Environmental Protection Agency and CDFA released the [California Water Action Plan](#), which will guide state efforts to enhance water supply reliability, restore damaged and destroyed ecosystems and improve the resilience of our infrastructure.

Governor Brown has called on all Californians to voluntarily reduce their water usage by 20 percent, and the [Save Our Water](#) campaign launched four [public service announcements](#) encouraging residents to conserve and has resources available in [Spanish](#). Last December, the Governor formed a [Drought Task Force](#) to review expected water allocations and California's preparedness for water scarcity. In May 2013, Governor Brown issued an [Executive Order](#) to direct state water officials to expedite the review and processing of voluntary transfers of water and water rights.

For more information concerning drought resources for California farmers, ranchers and farmworkers, please visit – www.cdfa.ca.gov/drought



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