

What is CCAMP?

CCAMP (California Certified Agricultural Mediation Program) is certified by the USDA and administered by Common Ground: Center for Cooperative Solutions, UC Davis Extension. The program provides mediation on agricultural issues including:

- Compliance with farm programs, including conservation programs
- Agricultural credit
- Agricultural lands
- Rural water loan programs
- Rural housing loans
- Rural business loans
- Crop insurance
- Pesticides
- Grazing on Forest Service System land
- Wetlands determination

What are the benefits of mediation?

The mediation process provides a non-threatening, informal procedure as an initial step in resolving conflicts.

Mediation provides the following benefits:

- Participants control the outcome
- Mediation is “forward-looking”
- Mediation can preserve relationships
- Mediation is creative
- Mediation is confidential
- Mediation can be fast
- Mediation is likely to be successful

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The banner is a vertical rectangle with a black and white photograph of a plowed field as its background. The furrows in the field create a strong sense of perspective, leading the eye towards the horizon. The text is centered and reads: 'CALIFORNIA CERTIFIED AGRICULTURAL MEDIATION PROGRAM (CCAMP)' in a large, serif font at the top. Below this, a black horizontal bar contains the text 'USDA CERTIFIED SINCE 2002' in white, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the banner is the 'Common Ground' logo, which consists of the words 'Common Ground' in a stylized, serif font, with 'Common' on the top line and 'Ground' on the bottom line. Below the logo, in a smaller, sans-serif font, are the words 'CENTER FOR COOPERATIVE SOLUTIONS' and 'UC DAVIS EXTENSION'.

What is Mediation?

Mediation is a voluntary, confidential process in which a trained, impartial person helps people examine their mutual problems, identify and consider options and carefully consider possible resolutions. A mediator has no decision-making authority. Unlike a judge or an arbitrator, a mediator cannot decide what is right or “make” either party do anything.

What happens in mediation?

The mediation process focuses on the problem, not the people or their positions. It provides a neutral confidential setting with a trained mediator who enables all parties to work out a solution that meets the interests of both sides. Each party is given the opportunity to explain his/her point of view, what the dispute is about, what the issues are and how he/she would like to see the situation resolved. After each side has presented information, the mediator clarifies the issues and re-frames them in neutral language that focuses on the issues, not the people involved. The process promotes calm and rational discussion of the issues in order to identify goals and construct a plan that will benefit all parties.

What kinds of disputes can be mediated?

Mediation services are available through CCAMP to agricultural producers, creditors of producers, and persons directly affected by actions of the U.S. Department of Agriculture to resolve issues relating to:

- Compliance with farm programs, including conservation programs
- Agricultural credit
- Agricultural lands
- Rural water loan programs
- Rural housing loans
- Rural business loans
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Mediation can be used as an alternative to appealing an adverse determination by the USDA, or as an alternative to litigation when a dispute exists between a producer and private or public parties.

What is the outcome of mediation?

Participation in mediation is voluntary and mediators do not force the parties to reach an agreement or to accept particular settlement terms. Mediators help the parties develop and agree upon a realistic, workable solution to their problem based on their needs and interests.

If parties come to an agreement that is mutually acceptable, the agreement is written down in clear, specific language and all parties sign it. However, if no agreement is reached, then the parties “agree to disagree” and mediation is closed. If no agreement is reached, all administrative and other remedies remain. Because the mediation process is confidential, discussions with the mediator and other parties cannot be used for other purposes as defined by the courts.

How long does mediation take?

Because mediation is a flexible process, it handles cases quickly and efficiently. The process usually takes 30 to 45 days from the time that mediation is requested until an agreement is reached.

How much does mediation cost?

Mediation is a free service provided by Common Ground: Center for Cooperative Solutions, UC Davis Extension. CCAMP is funded by the USDA. There may be costs associated with a mediation, such as when outside experts are used, or when other services are required to resolve a dispute. But generally, there is no cost for the mediation service itself.

How do I request mediation?

You may request mediation through your local Farm Service Agency or Rural Development Agency office. You may also contact Common Ground: Center for Cooperative Solutions directly at (530) 754-7060.

If you have received a letter notifying you of an adverse decision by the USDA, it may also inform you of your right to mediate that decision. If you have not received a letter from the USDA notifying you of a right to mediate an adverse decision, and you would like to mediate a dispute with the USDA, you can contact either the USDA state office in Davis at (530) 792-5520 or Common Ground directly.

For more information on mediation, contact the California Certified Agricultural Mediation Program through:

Common Ground: Center for Cooperative Solutions

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