

PURPOSE

Q: What is the purpose of the Pilot Fallowing Program?

A: The purpose of the program is to reduce water usage within the Greater Kaweah GSA (GKGSA) area by encouraging farmers to voluntarily fallow land. This reduction helps bring the basin into compliance, reduces impacts to domestic and irrigation wells, and increases Sustainable Yield.

BIDDING & Eligibility

Q: Who is eligible to participate in the program?

A: Any farm within the GKGSA with 4 or more acres is eligible to bid.

Q: What does Land Fallowing Mean

A: Land fallowing means that you will not plant a commercially harvested crop on the designated fields for a period of one year. You will not be allowed to pump groundwater on that land.

Q: What crops can be fallowed

A: Any crop can be fallowed. Even permanent crops in transition such as walnuts.

Q: How does fallowing land impact my water dashboard

A: Each acre fallowed is assigned a fixed value of 1.87 acre feet per acre. Your water dashboard will reflect a reduction of 1.87 acre feet times number of acres fallowed.

Q: Can I bid for more than one year at a time?

A: Bidders may sign up for one year at a time only in the program.

Q: Where can I submit my bid for the Fallowing Program?

A: Sealed bids can be submitted online or at the Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District office.

SCORING

Q: How are the bids scored, and what criteria are used to prioritize them?

A: Bids are scored by a 3rd party through a blind process and are prioritized by a uniform bidding process i.e., lowest bids are aggregated until the total price meets the goal of the Greater Kaweah GSA. This establishes the uniform price, which all accepted bids are then paid that fixed price.

Q: What are the rules regarding sealed bids, and how are they kept confidential?

A: Sealed bids are kept confidential and are opened and scored by a 3rd party. The process is conducted blind to ensure fairness and integrity.

PROGRAM COST AND PAYMENT

Q: Who pays for the program

A: The program is paid for by the collection of pumping fees from all users of groundwater in the Greater Kaweah GSA

Q: When and how will payments be made to participants?

A: Growers can elect to receive payment in December 2025 or January 2026. Fallowing income can offset pumping fees on remaining acres.

COMPLIANCE

Q: What are the rules for cover crops?

A: Cover crops are allowed but must be sustained via rainwater only.

Q: How do cover crops fit into the program, and why are they not allowed to be harvested?

A: Cover crops are allowed but must be sustained via rainwater only. Harvesting is not allowed to maintain compliance with the program's water reduction goals, but grazing is allowed in V2 of the fallowing program.

Q: How will compliance be verified?

A: Compliance will be verified using LandIQ and ground truthing. Violators of the agreement will be subject to fines and may be prohibited from future participation in land fallowing programs sponsored by the GKGSA.

Q: What happens in cases of violations? Is there an appeal process?

A: Gross violations, such as harvesting/grazing, irrigating cover crop, or growing commercial crop, can result in fines and disqualification from future programs. An appeal process is available, where violators can make a case to the stakeholder committee, and the final decision will be made by the board.

Q: What penalties are in place for violators, and what constitutes a gross violation?

A: Violators will be fined \$500/acre foot for any groundwater applied to designated fallowed land, and gross violations include harvesting, irrigating cover crops, and growing commercial crops.

Q: How is fallowing verification conducted, and what are the key dates?

A: Fallowing verification will be done using LandIQ and ground truthing in April and August 2025.

IMPACTS

Q: What benefits can I expect as a farmer participating in the program?

A: Participation leads to immediate reduction in pumping, assistance in basin compliance, reduced impacts to wells, eventual increase in Sustainable Yield, and economical benefits compared to land purchasing. Participants will also receive payments after the fallowing period.

TIMELINE

Q: When would I have to fallow my land?

A: October 1, 2024 through September 31, 2025

Q: When and how will payments be made to participants?

A: Growers can elect to receive payment in December 2025 or January 2026. Fallowing income can offset pumping fees on remaining acres.