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From Brenda's Desk

Happy Spring finally!! It sure was a long winter, but we are happy to see our producers in the fields and all the babies running around the pastures.

Grassland Conservation Reserve Program signup is open. The deadline to submit a bid for a Grassland CRP contract is May 26th. Please see below article for more information.



Please remember the deadline to file your Acreage Report is **July 15, 2023**. We will need to know your plant dates, intended use, and shares in each crop. Along those lines, if you have any failed crops: FSA needs to be notified within 15 days of when the loss is first apparent. This is especially important for crops covered under our Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), but applies to all crops, as it affects your crop reports, which affect your benefits you receive through FSA programs. We will be having Lovell Crop Reporting days again this year, call us to set up an appointment.

The [Emergency Relief Program Phase Two](#) and [Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program](#) are open for applications. The deadline to apply for these programs is **June 2, 2023**. For more information about these programs contact this office.

Have a safe spring!

Important Deadlines

May 26th: CRP Grassland Signup Deadline

May 29th: Office Closed in Observance of Memorial Day

June 2nd: ERP Phase 2 and PARP Deadline

June 19th: Office Closed in Observance of Juneteenth

July 15th: Deadline to Report 2022 NAP Production

July 15th: Spring Acreage Reporting Deadline

USDA Announces Grassland Conservation Reserve Program Signup for 2023

USDA announced that agricultural producers and private landowners can begin signing up for the Grassland Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) starting today and running through May 26, 2023. Among CRP enrollment opportunities, Grassland CRP is a unique working lands program, allowing producers and landowners to continue grazing and haying practices while conserving grasslands and promoting plant and animal biodiversity as well as healthier soil.

More than 3.1 million acres were accepted through the 2022 Grassland CRP signup from agricultural producers and private landowners. That signup—the highest ever for the program—reflects the continued success and value of investments in voluntary, producer-led, working lands conservation programs. The current total participation in Grassland CRP is 6.3 million acres, which is part of the 23 million acres enrolled in CRP opportunities overall.

Since 2021, USDA's FSA, which administers all CRP programs, has made several improvements to Grassland CRP to broaden the program's reach, including:

- Creating two [National Priority Zones](#) to put focus on environmentally sensitive land such as that prone to wind erosion.
- Enhancing offers with 10 additional ranking points to producers and landowners who are historically underserved, including beginning farmers and military veterans.
- Leveraging the [Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program](#) (CREP) to engage historically underserved communities within Tribal Nations in the Great Plains.

How to Sign Up for Grassland CRP

Landowners and producers interested in Grassland CRP, or any other CRP enrollment option, should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#) to learn more or to apply for the program before the deadlines.

Producers with expiring CRP acres can enroll in the Transition Incentives Program (TIP), which incentivizes producers who sell or enter into a long-term lease with a beginning, veteran, or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher who plans to sustainably farm or ranch the land.

Other CRP Signups

Under [Continuous CRP](#), producers and landowners can enroll throughout the year. Offers are automatically accepted provided the producer and land meet the eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the statutory cap. Continuous CRP includes a Climate-Smart Practice Incentive to increase carbon sequestration and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by helping producers and landowners establish trees and permanent grasses, enhance wildlife habitat, and restore wetlands.

FSA offers several additional enrollment opportunities within Continuous CRP, including the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Initiative, the Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP), and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Also available is the Clean Lakes Estuaries and Rivers (CLEAR30) Initiative, which was originally piloted in twelve states but has since been expanded nationwide, giving producers and landowners across the country the opportunity to enroll in 30-year CRP contracts for water quality practices.

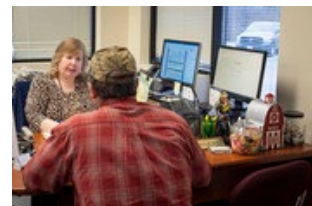
Policy Updates for Acreage Reporting

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) recently made several policy updates for acreage reporting for cover crops, revising intended use, late-filed provisions, grazing allotments as well as updated the definitions of "idle" and "fallow."

Reporting Cover Crops:

Cover crop types can be chosen from the following four categories:

- **Cereals and other grasses**
- **Legumes**
- **Brassicacae and other broadleaves**
- **Mixtures**



If the cover crop is harvested for any use other than forage or grazing and is not terminated according to policy guidelines, then that crop will no longer be considered a cover crop and the acreage report must be revised to reflect the actual crop.

Permitted Revision of Intended use After Acreage Reporting Date:

New operators or owners who pick up a farm after the acreage reporting deadline has passed and the crop has already been reported on the farm, have 30 calendar days from the date when the new operator or owner acquired the lease on land, control of the land or ownership and new producer crop share interest in the previously reported crop acreage. Under this policy, appropriate documentation must be provided to the County Committee's satisfaction to determine that a legitimate operator or ownership and producer crop share interest change occurred to permit the revision.

Acreage Reports:

In order to maintain program eligibility and benefits, you must timely file acreage reports. Failure to file an acreage report by the crop acreage reporting deadline may result in ineligibility for future program benefits. FSA will not accept acreage reports provided more than a year after the acreage reporting deadline.

Reporting Grazing Allotments:

FSA offices can now accept acreage reports for grazing allotments. You will use form "FSA-578" to report grazing allotments as animal unit months (AUMs) using the "Reporting Unit" field. Your local FSA office will need the grazing period start and end date and the percent of public land.

Definitions of Terms

FSA defines "idle" as cropland or a balance of cropland within a Common Land Unit (CLU) (field/subfield) which is not planted or considered not planted and does not meet the definition of fallow or skip row.

Fallow is considered unplanted cropland acres which are part of a crop/fallow rotation where cultivated land that is normally planted is purposely kept out of production during a regular growing season.

For more information, contact your Big Horn County USDA Service Center at (307)765-2689 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Know your Final Planting Dates

All producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office for more information on the final planting date for specific crops. The final planting dates vary by crop, planting period and county so please contact your local FSA office for a list of county-specific planting deadlines. The timely planting of a crop, by the final planting date, may prevent loss of program benefits.

FSA Offers Joint Financing Option on Direct Farm Ownership Loans

The USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) [Direct Farm Ownership loans](#) can help farmers and ranchers become owner-operators of family farms, improve and expand current operations, increase agricultural productivity, and assist with land tenure to save farmland for future generations.

There are three types of Direct Farm Ownership Loans: regular, down payment and joint financing. FSA also offers a [Direct Farm Ownership Microloan](#) option for smaller financial needs up to \$50,000.

Joint financing allows FSA to provide more farmers and ranchers with access to capital. FSA lends up to 50 percent of the total amount financed. A commercial lender, a State program or the seller of the property being



purchased, provides the balance of loan funds, with or without an FSA guarantee. The maximum loan amount for a joint financing loan is \$600,000, and the repayment period for the loan is up to 40 years.

The operation must be an eligible farm enterprise. Farm Ownership loan funds cannot be used to finance nonfarm enterprises and all applicants must be able to meet general eligibility requirements. Loan applicants are also required to have participated in the business operations of a farm or ranch for at least three years out of the 10 years prior to the date the application is submitted. The applicant must show documentation that their participation in the business operation of the farm or ranch was not solely as a laborer.

For more information about farm loans, contact your Big Horn County USDA Service Center at (307)765-2689 or visit fsa.usda.gov.



Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NRCS is Now Accepting Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) Applications Applications Must be received by June 1, 2023

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Wyoming is currently accepting applications for enrollment into the Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) program. This enrollment is specifically for the AMA - Risk Management Agency (RMA). AMA-RMA is a voluntary Farm Bill program which provides financial assistance for High tunnels and facilitating practices. **Producers interested in implementing conservation practices to improve natural resources on their private agricultural land have until June 1, 2023 to submit applications.**

Producers must have farm records current with the Farm Service Agency and submit a complete program application to NRCS to be considered for financial assistance through AMA-RMA.

Applications are accepted at all Wyoming NRCS offices located in USDA Service Centers across the state. To find out more information about EQIP please visit the [AMA webpage](#). To locate an NRCS field office near you, please visit the [USDA Service Center webpage](#).

When visiting with NRCS staff about the AMA program, landowners are encouraged to inquire about NRCS' comprehensive conservation plans. The Agency continually strives to put conservation planning at the forefront of its programs and initiatives. Conservation plans provide landowners with a comprehensive inventory and assessment of their resources, as well as an appropriate start to improving the quality of soil, water, air, plants, and wildlife on their land.



Big Horn County
USDA Service Center

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Farm Service Agency

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Martin Mercer-Chairman
Spencer Ellis-Vice Chairman
Justine Paxton-Member

COC Meeting: May 17, 2023 1:00 p.m.

Natural Resources Conservation Service

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