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News from the Office

It's the start of fall, a busy season with a great amount of ranch and farming activity as everyone is gearing up for fall and preparing for winter. Please keep safety in mind as you go about all your activities.



We are also busy at the Farm Service Agency office. We are working hard to finish out open applications, completing farm records changes, and general records cleanup. As we rollover to the new fiscal year on October 1, 2023, we are also getting ready to make annual [Conservation Reserve Program \(CRP\) and Grassland CRP](#) payments as well as payments for eligible [Agriculture Risk Coverage \(ARC\) and Price Loss Coverage \(PLC\)](#) programs, [Emergency Relief Program \(ERP\)](#), and [Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program \(PARP\)](#).

If you are a producer who has [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program \(NAP\)](#) coverage on any of your crops for 2023, please remember it's important to file a timely notice of loss when a disaster occurs or when the losses from a natural disaster become apparent. Losses include lower than expected yield from harvested fields as well as fields you were not able to harvested due to poor growth. There are specific timelines for such reporting, depending on the crop covered by NAP. Please contact our office if you have any questions about the requirements associated with NAP coverage.

For producers who did NAP buy-up on eligible hay crops for 2023, please be on the lookout for the notification letter sometime between now and February 2024 with the premium payment owed for the additional coverage. If you have questions, or do not receive the notification, please contact our office. The notification is generated at the National level and the county office does not see a copy of your letter so please have it handy if you contact our office with questions.

As you start risk mitigation planning for 2024 and would like to consider or continue using NAP for your operation, the deadline to sign up for grazing and fall crop coverage is **Friday, December 1, 2023**. See the article below to see if this program is right for you and for available coverage options.

We have several outstanding disaster applications for year 2023 in our office. If you submitted notice of losses for livestock and crop losses, watch your mailbox for notice of deadlines and additional information that may be required. If you are participating in these programs and have already submitted your applications for payment, we are working hard on completing these and getting them through the required for 1st and 2nd level reviews, a lengthy and time-consuming process.

If you have any questions or concerns, always know you can reach out to me, my office staff, or our committee members.

Wishing you all a safe and healthy fall,

Sheryl Hunter
Carbon/Albany County Executive Director

Important Dates:

- **October 1, 2023:** Start of Fiscal Year 2024.
- **October 9, 2023:** Office closed Monday for federal holiday.
- **November 6, 2023:** Ballots for COC Election in LAA 3 will be mailed out to eligible voters.

Also remember the following:

- **NAP Notice of Loss** must be filed the earlier of 15 days of the disaster occurrence or when losses become apparent, or 15 days of the final harvest date.
- **LIP Notice of Loss** must be filed 30 calendar days of when the loss is first apparent.
- **Leases and/or Land Ownership changes including operational changes** must be reported within 30 calendar days of change to avoid late fees, repayment of funds issued and/or ineligibility for program participation. The deadline to submit changes for 2023 program year has closed. For the 2024 program year the deadline for all changes is August 1, 2024.

USDA to Begin Issuing \$1.75 Billion to Agricultural Producers Through Critical Emergency Relief Programs

This week, FSA will issue more than \$581 million in 2021 and 2022 drought and wildfire emergency relief to eligible ranchers.

FSA is closing out the [Emergency Livestock Relief Program](#) (ELRP) for losses suffered in 2021. ELRP Phase Two payments are estimated at \$115.7 million. Ranchers who lost grazing acres due to drought and wildfire and received assistance through ELRP Phase One will soon receive an additional payment through ELRP Phase Two. This second payment will be equal to 20% of the 2021 gross ELRP Phase One payment. ELRP Phase Two payments to producers will be automatic with no application required. In April 2022, FSA staff processed more than 100,000 payments through ELRP Phase One and paid eligible ranchers more than \$600 million for 2021 grazing losses.

In 2022, ranchers continued to experience significant loss of grazing acres due to drought and wildfire. To help mitigate these losses, eligible ranchers will receive ELRP disaster assistance payments for increases in supplemental feed costs. To expedite payments, determine producer eligibility and calculate the ELRP 2022 payment, FSA is using livestock inventories and drought-affected forage acreage or restricted animal units and grazing days due to wildfire already reported to FSA by ranchers when they submitted their Livestock Forage Disaster Program applications. ELRP payments for 2022 losses are estimated at \$465.4 million and will be automatic with no application required.

Emergency Relief Program Phase Two

FSA is closing out Phase Two of the [Emergency Relief Program](#) (ERP) this week through the delivery of more than \$1.17 billion in crop disaster assistance payments to producers of eligible crops who suffered losses, measured through decreases in revenue, due to qualifying natural disaster events that occurred in calendar years 2020 and 2021. ERP Phase Two was intended primarily for producers of crops that were not covered by federal crop insurance or FSA's Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). Previously, through ERP Phase one, FSA staff processed more than 300,000 applications and paid an estimated 217,000 eligible producers more than \$7.4 billion.



More Information

These programs represent a few of FSA's extensive commodity, conservation, credit, disaster recovery and safety-net programs. By the close of the fiscal year on Sept. 30, for all farm and farm loan programs — including vital access to [capital for distressed borrowers](#) — USDA, through the delivery of FSA programs, will have invested more than \$19 billion in America's agricultural producers with more economic support on the way in fiscal year 2024.

For more information on available FSA programs, contact your [local USDA Service Center](#).

USDA Reminds Producers of Application Deadlines for Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

USDA Carbon/Albany County Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers of approaching application deadlines for purchasing risk coverage for some crops through the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). NAP provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops impacted by natural disasters that result in lower yields, crop losses, or prevented crop planting.



NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available, including forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass and more.

Upcoming application deadlines for NAP coverage in Carbon and Albany Counties for the 2024 production season include:

- Grass for grazing: **December 1, 2023**
- Grass for forage: **December 1, 2023**

NAP basic coverage is available at 55% of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50% of expected production. Buy-up coverage is available in some cases. NAP offers higher levels of coverage, ranging from 50% to 65% of expected production in 5% increments, at 100% of the average market price. Producers of organic crops and crops marketed directly to consumers also may exercise the "buy-up" option to obtain NAP coverage of 100% of the average market price at coverage levels ranging between 50% and 65% of expected production. Buy-up coverage is not available for crops intended for grazing.

For all coverage levels, the NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties. Premiums apply for buy-up coverage.

If a producer has a Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification (form CCC-860) on file with FSA, it may serve as an application for basic coverage for all eligible crops beginning with crop year 2022. These producers will have all NAP-related service fees for basic coverage waived. These producers may also receive a 50% premium reduction if higher levels of coverage are elected on form CCC-471, prior to the application closing date for each crop.

To learn more about NAP visit fsa.usda.gov/nap or contact your local USDA Service Center at 307-326-5657.

Applying for FSA Guaranteed Loans

FSA guaranteed loans allow lenders to provide agricultural credit to farmers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria. Farmers and ranchers apply for a guaranteed loan through a lender, and the lender arranges for the guarantee. FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. Guaranteed loans can be used for both farm ownership and operating purposes.



Guaranteed farm ownership loans can be used to purchase farmland, construct or repair buildings, develop farmland to promote soil and water conservation or to refinance debt.

Guaranteed operating loans can be used to purchase livestock, farm equipment, feed, seed, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance and other operating expenses.

FSA can guarantee farm ownership and operating loans up to \$2,037,000. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the producer's ability to repay the loan. Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years.

For more information on guaranteed loans, contact the Platte County USDA Service Center at 307-322-4050 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Protect Your Investments in the Soil: USDA's Modernized Lab Data Mart Website Provides User-Friendly, State-of-the-Art Data

Understanding your specific soil and its dynamic properties, which can change over time due to human impacts, land management, and climate change, can be invaluable. The USDA's [Natural Resources Conservation Service \(NRCS\)](#), through the [National Cooperative Soil Survey \(NCSS\)](#), has a team of soil and data scientists who are bringing customers the best soil information using the newest technology through the Lab Data Mart.

The newly updated [Lab Data Mart](#) website, also known as the National Cooperative Lab Characterization Database, brings valuable soil data to the public's fingertips through a user-friendly, state-of-the-art interactive map. It includes data estimating soil properties such as organic carbon, clay content, calcium carbonate equivalent, and pH, which is beneficial in soil health assessments. Architects, educators, engineers, farmers, landowners, researchers, scientists, and anyone looking to learn more about their soil can access the latest data to make more informed decisions and reduce potential [soil risks and hazards](#).

The Lab Data Mart includes mid-infrared (MIR) soil spectroscopy data gathered during soil analysis at the NRCS' Kellogg Soil Survey Laboratory, one of the largest libraries of such data in the world. MIR soil spectroscopy uses the interactions between soil matter and infrared radiation to estimate soil properties.

The Lab Data Mart's interactive map also links to a national database of soil characterization data, allowing users to locate soil samples and "pedons" analyzed in the lab. A pedon is the smallest unit of soil, containing all the soil horizons of a particular soil type. The customized data in the Lab Data Mart is downloadable to multiple applications and web services and is continuously updated as more sampled soil sites are added or re-visited.

How Can the Lab Data Mart Help You?

- **Determining carbon credits or improving carbon sequestration:** The data can help you determine how much carbon is currently in the top 12 inches of soil and decide whether you want to sequester more carbon and consider methods and management practices to do so.
- **Leasing or buying land:** The data may help determine if your planned management practices will work; and if not, what could be the added cost to do things differently. Understanding the mineralogy of your soil can help you determine if it requires soil amendments, a new tool or piece of equipment to accomplish your goals, or a change to what you farm or your tillage operation.
- **Taking a more systematic view of your land:** Whether working with an NRCS conservation planner or on your own, the data helps you know more about your soil and ties into how you look at the whole [ecological site](#).

Who Can Help You Use Lab Data Mart and Help You Understand Your Data?

NRCS State Soil Scientists and their staff, as well as technical service providers, can assist with obtaining the data in Lab Data Mart and understanding it. Contact NRCS at your [local USDA Service Center](#) for help and more information. Visit the [Lab Data Mart website](#), or learn more about NRCS' [Soil Science](#).



Carbon/Albany County
USDA Service Center

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Farm Service Agency

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County Committee

Cheryl Munroe, Chair
Mary Ann Boles, Vice-Chair
Robin Carter, Member
Darcy Kaisler, Member
Ryan Wilson, Member

Next COC meeting: TBD

Natural Resources Conservation Service

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