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## Crook County Corner

Hello Crook County Producers,

I hope that November has brought safe shipping of your Calves and that you are enjoying the mild weather that we have been having. I can't believe that there is still some green peeking out around the county. What a stark difference a year can bring. In this time of year, we always slow down a little and reflect on the things that we are thankful for. Those of us here in the office are extremely thankful for all of our Crook County Producers' patience and kind words as the office has been experiencing some staffing changes as well as other adjustments! We truly appreciate you all!



**Update Your Records** October 1st marked the start of a new fiscal year. As such, FSA encourages early reporting of any changes to your operation in which you reorganize to form a Trust, LLC or other legal entity. Making these changes now will reduce the possibility of program eligibility complications later in the year. In addition, FSA is cleaning up our producer record database and needs your help. Please report any changes of address, zip code, phone number, email address, bank accounts for direct deposit, or an incorrect name or business name on file to our office. FSA and NRCS program participants are required to promptly report changes in their farming operation to the County Committee in writing and to update their *Farm Operating Plan* on form CCC-902. To update your records, contact your Crook County USDA Service Center at 307-283-2870

**NAP Information** Producers with NAP coverage in 2023 are urged to report their harvested production. FSA can supply maps for you to record your harvested production on a field-by-field basis. Timely and accurately reporting these yields is key to your farm's Actual Production History (APH) and indemnity payments. Producers with no harvested production must have an appraisal completed prior to grazing the acreage. Failure to do this will result in a reduced indemnity payment.

**Interested in NAP for 2024?** In order to potentially receive benefits in 2024 you must be enrolled in NAP and have purchased coverage for the eligible crop you produce in which a loss occurred due to a qualifying natural disaster. **December 1, 2023** is the final day to enroll fall seeded crops, perennial forage and honey for the 2024 program year.

**NAP Service Fees** NAP offers varying levels of coverage, from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments. Buy-up levels of NAP coverage are available if the producer can show at least one year of previously successfully growing the crop for which coverage is being requested. 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. Beginning, limited resource and targeted underserved farmers or ranchers remain eligible for a waiver of NAP service fees and premium reduction when they file form CCC-860, "*Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource and Beginning Farmer or Rancher Certification.*"

**Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP)** Producers who will be shearing or who have shorn their sheep and are interested in receiving a wool LDP, must sign the CCC-633EZ page 1, prior to losing beneficial interest. If you have already signed page 1, you will be required to furnish the following information on the CCC-633EZ to receive an LDP: If you are a sheep Producer please watch for this form in the mail it will be sent out towards the end of December.

1. Certified or production evidence of wool weights with receipts
2. Flock size, which includes the number of ewes, yearlings and rams shorn
3. Shearing date
4. The breed of your sheep

**Important Deadlines:**

**Acresage Report:**

**November 15** – Apiculture (bees), fall -seeded small grains.

**NAP:**

**December 1**- All perennial grasses, alfalfa, clover, mixed forage, and honey  
Within 15 days of crop loss – Submit Notice of Loss

**November 15** - (varies by crop) – Final day to submit Application for Payment

**December 12, 2023**- County Committee Meeting for Ballet Counting Only

**Days USDA Offices Are Closed**

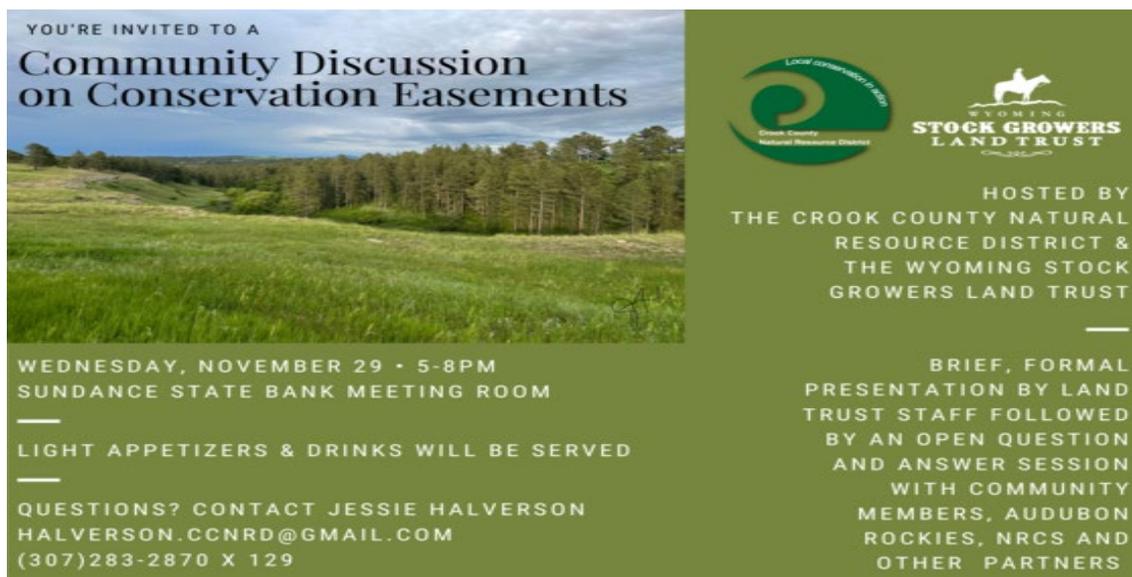
Nov. 10 - Observation of Veterans Day

Nov. 23 - Thanksgiving Day

Dec. 25 - Christmas Holiday

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## Your Invited to a Community Discussion on Conservation Easements



YOU'RE INVITED TO A  
**Community Discussion  
on Conservation Easements**

**Local Conservation Trust**  
CROOK COUNTY  
NATURAL RESOURCE DISTRICT

**WYOMING  
STOCK GROWERS  
LAND TRUST**

HOSTED BY  
THE CROOK COUNTY NATURAL  
RESOURCE DISTRICT &  
THE WYOMING STOCK  
GROWERS LAND TRUST

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29 • 5-8PM  
SUNDANCE STATE BANK MEETING ROOM

LIGHT APPETIZERS & DRINKS WILL BE SERVED

QUESTIONS? CONTACT JESSIE HALVERSON  
HALVERSON.CCNRD@GMAIL.COM  
(307)283-2870 X 129

BRIEF, FORMAL  
PRESENTATION BY LAND  
TRUST STAFF FOLLOWED  
BY AN OPEN QUESTION  
AND ANSWER SESSION  
WITH COMMUNITY  
MEMBERS, AUDUBON  
ROCKIES, NRCS AND  
OTHER PARTNERS

# FSA Encourages Farmers and Ranchers to Vote in County Committee Elections

The 2023 Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections will begin on Nov. 6, 2023, when ballots are mailed to eligible voters. The deadline to return ballots to local FSA offices, or to be postmarked, is Dec. 4, 2023.



County committee members are an important component of the operations of FSA and provide a link between the agricultural community and USDA. Farmers and ranchers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity price support programs; conservation programs; incentive, indemnity and disaster programs for some commodities; emergency programs and eligibility. FSA committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must:

- Be of legal voting age or, if not of legal voting age, supervise and conduct the farming operation of an entire farm.
- Have an interest in a farm or ranch as either:
  - An individual who meets one or more of the following:
    - Is eligible and capable to vote in one's own right.
    - Is a partner of a general partnership.
    - Is a member of a joint venture.
  - Participates or cooperates in any FSA program that is provided by law. A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information to FSA about their farming or ranching operation(s) but may not have applied or received program benefits.

Eligible voters in Local Administrative Area (Insert Number), who do not receive a ballot can obtain one from their local FSA county office. Customers can identify which LAA they or their farming operation is in by using our new GIS locator tool available at [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections).

Newly elected committee members will take office Jan. 1, 2024.

The candidates in this year's election are:

Jeanne Habeck is nominated in LAA 2, Crook County, to serve as a committee member for a 3-year term. Jeanne and her husband, Philip, have been hay producers and have a cow/calf and backgrounding operation for the past 30 years.

Jeanne is an active member of the Crook County Cattlewomen and has been serving as a member of the Crook County FSA Committee for the past three years. She served as a non-voting advisory member of the Crook County FSA Committee before that. Jeanne is willing to serve on the Crook County FSA Committee if elected.

More information on county committees can be found at [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections) or by contacting the Crook County FSA office.

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## USDA Announces October 2023 Lending Rates for Agricultural Producers

USDA announced loan interest rates for October 2023, which are effective Oct. 2, 2023. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) loans provide important access to capital to help agricultural producers start or expand their farming operation, purchase equipment and storage structures or meet cash flow needs.



### **Operating, Ownership and Emergency Loans**

FSA offers farm ownership and operating loans with favorable interest rates and terms to help eligible agricultural producers, whether multi-generational, long-time, or new to the industry, obtain financing needed to start, expand or maintain a family agricultural operation. FSA also offers emergency loans to help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding, other natural disasters or quarantine. For many loan options, FSA sets aside funding for underserved producers, including, beginning, women, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and Hispanic farmers and ranchers.

Interest rates for Operating and Ownership loans for October 2023 are as follows:

- [Farm Operating Loans](#)(Direct): 5.250%
- [Farm Ownership Loans](#)(Direct): 5.250%
- [Farm Ownership Loans](#)(Direct, Joint Financing): 3.250%
- [Farm Ownership Loans](#)(Down Payment): 1.500%
- [Emergency Loan](#)(Amount of Actual Loss): 3.750%

FSA also offers guaranteed loans through commercial lenders at rates set by those lenders.

To access an interactive online, step-by-step guide through the farm loan process, visit the [Loan Assistance Tool](#) on farmers.gov.

### **Commodity and Storage Facility Loans**

Additionally, FSA provides low-interest financing to producers to build or upgrade on-farm storage facilities and purchase handling equipment and loans that provide interim financing to help producers meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are low. Funds for these loans are provided through the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) and are administered by FSA.

- [Commodity Loans](#)(less than one year disbursed): 6.375%
- [Farm Storage Facility Loans](#):
  - Three-year loan terms: 4.625%
  - Five-year loan terms: 4.375%
  - Seven-year loan terms: 4.375%
  - Ten-year loan terms: 4.125%
  - Twelve-year loan terms: 4.125%
- [Sugar Storage Facility Loans](#)(15 years): 4.250%

### **Simplified Direct Loan Application**

FSA developed a new, simplified direct loan application for producers seeking a direct farm loan. The new application, reduced from 29 to 13 pages, provides improved customer experience for producers applying for loans and enables them to complete a more streamlined application. Producers now also have the option to complete an electronic fillable form or a traditional paper application for submission to their local FSA service center.

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# Before You Break Out New Ground, Ensure Your Farm Meets Conservation Compliance

The term “sodbusting” is used to identify the conversion of land from native vegetation to commodity crop production after December 23, 1985. As part of the conservation provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985, if you’re proposing to produce agricultural commodities (crops that require annual tillage including one pass planting operations and sugar cane) on land that has been determined highly erodible and that has no crop history prior to December 23, 1985, that land must be farmed in accordance with a conservation plan or system that ensures no substantial increase in soil erosion.



Eligibility for many USDA programs requires compliance with a conservation plan or system on highly erodible land (HEL) used for the production of agricultural commodities. This includes Farm Service Agency (FSA) loan, disaster assistance, safety net, price support, and conservation programs; Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) conservation programs; and Risk Management Agency (RMA) Federal crop insurance.

Before you clear or prepare areas not presently under production for crops that require annual tillage, you are required to file Form AD-1026 “Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation Certification,” with FSA indicating the area to be brought into production. The notification will be referred to NRCS to determine if the field is considered highly erodible land. If the field is considered HEL, you are required to implement a conservation plan or system that limits the erosion to the tolerable soil loss (T) for the predominant HEL soil on those fields.

In addition, prior to removing trees or conducting any other land manipulations that may affect wetlands, remember to update form AD-1026, to ensure you remain in compliance with the wetland conservation provisions.

Prior to purchasing or renting new cropland acres, it is recommended that you check with your local USDA Service Center to ensure your activities will be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions.

For additional information on highly erodible land conservation and wetland conservation compliance, contact [your local USDA Service Center](#).

## Signature Policy

Using the correct signature when doing business with FSA can save time and prevent a delay in program benefits.

The following are FSA signature guidelines:

- A married woman must sign her given name: Mrs. Mary Doe, not Mrs. John Doe
- For a minor, FSA requires the minor's signature and one from the minor's parent

Note, by signing a document with a minor, the parent is liable for actions of the minor and may be liable for refunds, liquidated damages, etc.

When signing on one’s behalf the signature must agree with the name typed or printed on the form or be a variation that does not cause the name and signature to be in disagreement. Example - John W. Smith is on the form. The signature may be John W. Smith or J.W. Smith or J. Smith. Or Mary J. Smith may be signed as Mrs. Mary Joe Smith, M.J. Smith, Mary Smith, etc.

FAXED signatures will be accepted for certain forms and other documents provided the acceptable program forms are approved for FAXED signatures. Producers are responsible for the successful transmission and receipt of FAXED information.

Spouses may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and CCC programs in which either has an interest, unless written notification denying a spouse this authority has been provided to the county office.

Spouses cannot sign on behalf of each other as an authorized signatory for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities. Likewise, a spouse cannot sign a document on behalf of the other in order to affirm the eligibility of oneself.

Any member of a general partnership can sign on behalf of the general partnership and bind all members unless the Articles of Partnership are more restrictive. Spouses may sign on behalf of each other's individual interest in a partnership, unless notification denying a spouse that authority is provided to the county office. Acceptable signatures for general partnerships, joint ventures, corporations, estates, and trusts must consist of an indicator "by" or "for" the individual's name, individual's name and capacity, or individual's name, capacity, and name of entity.

For additional clarification on proper signatures contact your local FSA office.



## Crook County USDA Service Center

P.O. Box 1070  
117 South 21st Street  
Sundance, Wyoming 82729

Phone: 307-283-2870

Fax: 855-415-3442

### FARM SERVICE AGENCY

Dixie Mount  
Acting County Executive Director  
[dixie.mount@usda.gov](mailto:dixie.mount@usda.gov)

### NRCS

Keela Deaton  
District Conservationist  
[keela.deaton@usda.gov](mailto:keela.deaton@usda.gov)

### FSA PROGRAM TECHNICIANS

Tiffany Volkman  
[Tiffany.volkman@usda.gov](mailto:Tiffany.volkman@usda.gov)

### NRCS STAFF

Jason Nehl, Natural Resource Specialist  
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Jess Van Woerkom  
[Jessica.vanwoerkom@usda.gov](mailto:Jessica.vanwoerkom@usda.gov)

### COC MEMBERS

Jeanne Habeck, Chairperson  
Alan Ista, Vice Chairperson  
Matt Wood, Member

Crook County Natural Resource District  
Sarah Anderson  
[Anderson.ccnrd@gmail.com](mailto:Anderson.ccnrd@gmail.com)

Bridget Helms  
[crookcountynrd@gmail.com](mailto:crookcountynrd@gmail.com)

### County Committee Meeting:

December 12, 2023 for Ballet Counting Only

Jessica Halverson  
[Halverson.ccnrd@gmail.com](mailto:Halverson.ccnrd@gmail.com)