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## Laramie County Comments

Happy April Laramie County Farmers and Ranchers!

Please remember that if you have any failed crops that FSA needs to be notified within 15 days of when the loss is first apparent. This is especially important for NAP crops, but applies to all crops, as it affects your crop reports, which affect your benefits you receive through FSA programs.



If you have lost any livestock due to the recent weather we have had; please give us a call. We may be able to help with our Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP). We need to be notified within 30 days of when the loss is first apparent.

Thank you for everything you do!

-Laramie County FSA

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## USDA Offers Disaster Assistance to Agricultural Producers Impacted by Recent Winter Storms

*Recovery Assistance Available for Livestock Losses in Idaho, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming*

Casper, WY, March 21, 2023 – Agricultural operations in Idaho, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming have been significantly impacted by recent snowstorms. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has technical and financial assistance available to help farmers and livestock producers recover from these adverse weather events. Impacted producers should contact their local USDA Service Center to report losses and learn more about program options available to assist in their recovery from crop, land, infrastructure, and livestock losses and damages.

“These recent winter storms have taken their toll on livestock producers in Idaho, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming leaving producers with snow removal costs as well as increased feed expenses,” said Robert Bonnie, Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC). “We stand with our producers who have worked tirelessly in these severe conditions to keep livestock fed and to protect crops from Mother Nature’s wrath. We know these storms have left damage in their wake, and I’m glad that USDA offers a strong portfolio of disaster assistance programs available to help.”

### USDA Disaster Recovery Assistance

Producers who experience livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality may be eligible for the [Livestock Indemnity Program](#) (LIP). To participate in LIP, producers will have to provide acceptable documentation of

death losses resulting from an eligible adverse weather event and must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is apparent.

Meanwhile, the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program](#) (ELAP) provides eligible producers with compensation for feed and grazing losses. ELAP also includes costs associated with equipment rental fees for hay lifts and snow removal. For ELAP, producers will need to file a notice of loss within 30 days and honeybee losses within 15 days.

Additionally, eligible orchardists and nursery tree growers may be eligible for cost-share assistance through the [Tree Assistance Program](#) (TAP) to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes or vines lost. This complements the [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](#) (NAP) or crop insurance coverage, which covers the crop but not the plants or trees in all cases. For TAP, a program application must be filed within 90 days.

FSA also offers a variety of direct and guaranteed [farm loans](#), including operating and emergency farm loans, to producers unable to secure commercial financing. Producers in counties with a primary or contiguous disaster designation may be eligible for low-interest [emergency loans](#) to help them recover from production and physical losses. Loans can help producers replace essential property, purchase inputs like livestock, equipment, feed and seed, cover family living expenses or refinance farm-related debts and other needs. Additionally, FSA has a variety of loan servicing options available for borrowers who are unable to make scheduled payments on their farm loan programs debt to the Agency because of reasons beyond their control.

## **Risk Management**

Producers who have risk protection through [Federal Crop Insurance](#) or FSA's [NAP](#) should report crop damage to their crop insurance agent or FSA office. If they have crop insurance, producers should provide a notice of loss to their agent within 72 hours of initial discovery of damage and follow up in writing within 15 days.

For NAP covered crops, a [Notice of Loss \(CCC-576\)](#) must be filed within 15 days of the loss becoming apparent, except for hand-harvested crops, which should be reported within 72 hours. A recent policy change simplifies the NAP application process for underserved producers, allowing form CCC-860 Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification to serve as an application for basic NAP coverage for all eligible crops. These producers will have all NAP-related service fees for basic coverage waived, in addition to a 50% premium reduction if higher levels of coverage are elected.

## **Conservation**

FSA's [Emergency Conservation Program](#) (ECP) and [Emergency Forest Restoration Program](#) (EFRP) can assist landowners and forest stewards with financial and technical assistance to restore fencing, damaged farmland or forests.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is always available to provide technical assistance during the recovery process by assisting producers to plan and implement conservation practices on farms, ranches and working forests impacted by natural disasters. The [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP) can help producers plan and implement conservation practices on land impacted by natural disasters.

## **More Information**

Additional USDA disaster assistance information can be found on [farmers.gov](#), including USDA resources specifically for producers impacted by [winter storms](#). Those resources include the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#) and [Loan Assistance Tool](#). For FSA and NRCS programs, producers should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#). For assistance with a crop insurance claim, producers and landowners should contact their [crop insurance agent](#).

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)

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## USDA Makes \$31 Million in Grants Available to Help Farmers and Ranchers Add More Value to Their Products to Access New and Better Markets

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Under Secretary Xochitl Torres Small announced that USDA is making \$31 million in grants available to help farmers and ranchers access new and better markets by adding more value to their products.

USDA is making the grants available under the [Value-Added Producer Grant program](#). The grants help agricultural producers generate new products, create marketing opportunities and increase their incomes through value-added activities.

USDA is offering [priority points](#) to projects that advance key priorities under the Biden-Harris Administration to help rural communities and people address climate change and environmental justice, advance racial justice, place-based equity, and opportunity, and create more and better market opportunities.

Eligible applicants include independent producers, agricultural producer groups, farmer or rancher cooperatives, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures.

Funding priority will be given to beginning farmers or ranchers who are military veterans or socially disadvantaged individuals; small and mid-sized family farms or ranches; and farmer or rancher cooperatives. Priority also will be given to projects that propose a mid-tier value chain by developing a supply network that moves agricultural products from production through consumption in a local or regional market.

The funding may be used for planning activities or working capital expenses related to producing and marketing a value-added agricultural product. Planning activities may include conducting feasibility studies and developing business plans. Working capital expenses may include costs associated with processing, marketing, advertising, inventory and salaries.

The maximum award for a planning grant is \$75,000. The maximum award for a working capital grant is \$250,000.

Electronic applications will be accepted via [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) until 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on May 11, 2023. Paper applications must be sent to the [State Office](#) where the project is proposed.

Paper applications must be postmarked and mailed or sent overnight by May 16, 2023. Applications also may be delivered in person or emailed to the [Wyoming State Office](#) by close of business May 16, 2023.

Additional information is available on page 16396 of the March 17 [Federal Register](#) or by contacting the [Wyoming State Office](#).

If you'd like to subscribe to USDA Rural Development updates, visit our [GovDelivery subscriber page](#).

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## Attention all Buyers of Agricultural Products

It is required that buyers of agricultural products check or register with the Secretary of State's Office to determine if there are liens against the Seller of the product. If a lien is found you are required to place the lien holder's name on the check as well as that of the Seller. Ag Products include but are not limited to: livestock (including horses), crops used for feed (hay, silage, oats, etc.), machinery, equipment and all other crops. **Failure to place the lien holder's name on the check may result in civil legal action being taken against the Buyer of the product. Protect yourself as a Buyer!** You may contact the Secretary of State's Office at 1-307-777-7311.

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## Making Your Land More Resilient to Drought

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service can help you conserve water and build resilience to drought, through conservation practices that improve irrigation efficiency, boost soil health, and manage grazing lands.

### Irrigation Efficiency

USDA helps you improve your irrigation efficiency to ensure each drop of water is used wisely. Saving water on your farm can help during drought and can offset rising water costs; reduce expenditures for energy, chemicals, and labor; and enhance revenues through higher crop yields and improved crop quality. Funded conservation practices include conversion to more efficient irrigation systems, such as micro-irrigation or subsurface drip irrigation, installation of irrigation pipeline, irrigation water management, structures for water control, and flow meters. Tools like drip irrigation, which provides water precisely where and when it's needed, can achieve greater precision with flow meters and soil moisture sensors.

### Soil Health

In addition, soil health conservation practices, such as reduced- or no-till, cover crops, mulching and residue management can help to make your soil, and the plants you grow or animals you raise, healthier. Healthier soil can absorb and retain more water for longer periods of time, making your farm or ranch more resilient to drought. Using soil health practices, you can conserve water by increasing your soil's water-holding capacity and use conservation tillage to keep the ground covered, reducing water loss through transpiration and evaporation.

And soil health practices increase organic matter, and each pound of organic matter can hold up to 20 pounds of water. Every 1% increase in organic matter results in as much as 25,000 gallons of soil water per acre. Each 1% increase in organic matter can also provide up to 30 pounds of more available nitrogen per acre. That means less money and time spent on inputs like water and fertilizer, which make your operation more profitable.

### Rotational/Prescribed Grazing, Water Sources for Livestock

Drought also impacts grazing lands, and NRCS works with you to increase the resilience of your livestock operation. Ranchers can adapt to dry conditions in two main ways: increasing the availability and suitability of forage and ensuring that cattle have an adequate and reliable source of water. For forage, rotational or prescribed grazing (rotating cattle among pastures) can relieve pressure on stressed vegetation and ensure a more consistent supply of forage for animals. NRCS conservationists can also work with you to plant more drought-tolerant forage species, plants best suited to local soils and conditions. For reliable sources of water, NRCS can help you with installing watering facilities, water wells, or water pipeline for livestock. Having available forage and water for livestock can make a big difference in difficult drought conditions.

USDA and NRCS are here for you, helping you recover from drought and prepare for the next one. For more information on drought recovery assistance at [farmers.gov/protection-recovery/drought#recovery](https://farmers.gov/protection-recovery/drought#recovery). For more information on conservation practices to make your operation more resilient to drought in future years, go to [www.nrcs.usda.gov](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov).



Laramie County

## USDA Service Center

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Dave Bowman  
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**Next COC Meeting:**

April 12, 2023