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From Darla's Desk...



First of all, I want to say THANK YOU to all of the farmers and ranchers in Park County – it is National Ag Week, and we salute you for your hard work and dedication to this lifestyle!

With the uncertainty of the ever-changing weather, please be aware of the programs we offer. If you experience loss to off stream headgates, washed out pipelines, excessive debris on your fields, etc., from ice jams or flooding, please contact this office as soon as possible so we can evaluate the damage. These kinds of events could make available the Emergency Conservation Program to help restore damages caused by flooding.

If you have lost any livestock due to natural disasters or extreme weather; please contact us within 30 days of the event or when loss is apparent to start your Notice of Loss. We may be able to help cover some of your losses after normal mortality is met.

Continue to notify the office of any weather-related losses. We have various programs that may be of assistance. Timely filing a Notice of Loss is the first step in the process. Livestock losses must be reported within 60 days of an event and feed/forage losses must be reported within 15-30 days.

Western Landowners Alliance is hosting a virtual event on March 30th about Grassland CRP.

Expert panelists include:

- Ivy Reynolds, FSA National Grassland CRP Program Manager;
- Katrina Thompson, NRCS National CSP Program Manager;
- Jill Randall, Wyoming Game and Fish Big Game Migration Coordinator;
- Bill Bunce, Wyoming FSA Executive Director; and
- Ben Anson, ranch manager in Meeteetse, Wyoming

[Register Here](#)

Upcoming Deadlines/Dates:

March 21 to March 27 – National Agriculture Week

April 7 – General CRP Signup Deadline

May 29 – Office Closed- Memorial Day

June 2 – Signup Deadline for ERP Phase 2 and PARP

July 15 – Acreage Reporting Deadline- Spring Planted Crops & Perennial Grasses

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

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](#)

Input Sought at Community Natural Resource Conservation Meeting



The Conservation Districts in Park, Big Horn and Washakie Counties would like to invite the public --- individuals, organizations, businesses and agencies --- to participate in the NRCS Division 1 Local Work Group meeting to be held at 9:00 AM on Wednesday, March 29th, 2023 at the Meeteetse Conservation District office (1906 State St. in Meeteetse).

The purpose of this meeting is to allow a broad range of local stakeholders with an interest in natural resource issues and Farm Bill funding programs to provide feedback on these topics to the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The Farm Bill stipulates that conservation programs must continue to be locally led. Through these meetings, the public is given an opportunity to help local conservation leaders set priorities such as ranking resource concerns and identifying priority watersheds and other local needs.

If you would like to participate virtually, please contact your local Conservation District office, South Big Horn CD 307-765-2483, Shoshone CD 307-548-7422, the Meeteetse Conservation District at (307) 868-2484 or meeteetse@conservevy.net!

Ask the Expert: A Q&A on Farm Storage Facility Loans

In this *Ask the Expert*, Toni Williams answers questions about how Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFLs) provide low-interest financing to help producers build or upgrade commodity storage facilities. Toni is the Agricultural Program Manager for FSFLs at the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

Toni has worked for FSA for more than 32 years and is responsible for providing national policy and guidance for Farm Storage Facility Loans.



What are Farm Storage Facility Loans?

Farm Storage Facility Loans provide low-interest financing for eligible producers to build or upgrade facilities to store commodities.

The FSFL program was created in May 2000 to address an existing grain shortage. Historically, FSFLs benefitted grain farmers, but a change in the 2008 Farm Bill extended the program to fruit and vegetable producers for cold storage. An additional change extended the program to washing and packing sheds, where fresh produce is washed, sorted, graded, labeled, boxed up, and stored before it heads to market. Since May 2000, FSA has made more than 40,000 loans for on-farm storage.

Eligible facility types include grain bins, hay barns, bulk tanks, and facilities for cold storage. Drying and handling and storage equipment including storage and handling trucks are also eligible. Eligible facilities and equipment may be new or used, permanently affixed or portable.

To read the full blog visit farmers.gov/blog/ask-the-expert-qa-on-farm-storage-facility-loans-with-toni-williams.

NRCS Unveiled New Website in 2022

NRCS unveiled a new website last year, which was designed for you, whether you're a farmer, rancher or forest landowner who uses Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) conservation programs or one of our partners who helps us deliver on the conservation mission.



The new NRCS site has been designed to support and enhance our mission by delivering relevant, timely, customer-focused information in an easy-to-navigate platform.

Key features include:

- It's been designed using the U.S. Web Design System, so you'll see a certain "family resemblance" among USDA and other federal websites, including farmers.gov.
- It's accessible (or 508 conformant), meaning the site is designed for use by people with disabilities.
- It's mobile responsive, meaning that it should work on a phone or tablet as easily as on a desktop computer.

Be sure to check out our: ·

Guides and Instructions - Search by resource type, NRCS program, natural resource concern, and state.

Getting Assistance - Learn more about available technical and financial assistance and how you can get support online as well as with the NRCS at your local Service Center.

Conservation by State - Find information on NRCS programs, services and other information in your state.

If you can't find something that you used to find on our website, contact us and we can help.



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County Committee
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Lynn George - Vice-Chairperson
Tim Accord - Regular Member

Next County Committee Meeting: TBD