

**March  
2022**



**Park County Farm  
Service Agency**

1017 Highway 14A  
Powell, WY 82435

Phone: 307-754-9411  
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Office Hours:  
8:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.  
Monday—Friday

**County Executive Director:**  
Darla Rhodes

**County Executive Director Trainee:**  
Charlton Bennett

**Program Technicians:**  
Tanya Butz

**County Committee:**  
Emily Karst—Chairperson  
Lynne George —Vice-chairperson  
Tim Acord —Member

**Next Committee Meeting:**  
To Be Determined

## County Office Message

### *From Darla's Desk...*



Happy spring to the Park County farmers and ranchers! 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.

With planting starting for a lot of our producers, I'd like to remind everyone to keep track of their planting dates. These dates are needed at both the FSA office and your insurance office. If you do not plan on seeding or re-seeding anything for crop year 2023, please call the office and set up an appointment to report your acreage/crops. The deadline to report acreage for crop year 2023 is July 15th.

If you have made changes to your banking information, address, phone number, land that you own, operate and/or lease, please report those changes to the office as soon as possible so that we may update that information and keep your records current.

## Keeping Livestock Inventory Records

Livestock inventory records are necessary in the event of a natural disaster, so remember to keep them updated.

When disasters strike, the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) can help you if you've suffered excessive livestock death losses and grazing or feed losses due to eligible natural disasters.

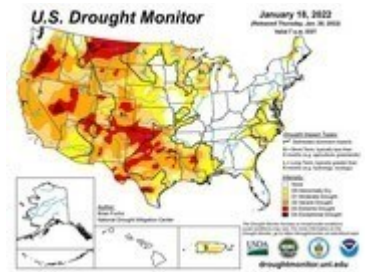
To participate in livestock disaster assistance programs, you'll be required to provide verifiable documentation of death losses resulting from an eligible adverse weather event and must submit a notice of loss to your local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is apparent. For grazing or feed losses, you must submit a notice of loss to your local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent and should maintain documentation and receipts.

You should record all pertinent information regarding livestock inventory records including:

- Documentation of the number, kind, type, and weight range of livestock
- Beginning inventory supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts.

For more information on documentation requirements, contact the Park County USDA Service Center at 307-754-9411 ext. 2 or visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov).

## Five Facts About the United States Drought Monitor



This is likely no surprise to you, but drought persists across the western U.S. and is intensifying in some areas. No geographic area is immune to the potential of drought at any given time. The [U.S. Drought Monitor](#) provides a weekly drought assessment, and it plays an important role in USDA programs that help farmers and ranchers recover from drought.

### Fact #1 - Numerous agencies use the Drought Monitor to inform drought-related decisions.

The map identifies areas of drought and labels them by intensity on a weekly basis. It categorizes the entire country as being in one of six levels of drought. The first two, None and Abnormally Dry (D0), are not considered to be drought. The next four describe increasing levels of drought: Moderate (D1), Severe (D2), Extreme (D3) and Exceptional (D4).

While many entities consult the Drought Monitor for drought information, drought declarations are made by federal, [state](#) and local agencies that may or may not use the Drought Monitor to inform their decisions. Some of the ways USDA uses it to determine a producer's eligibility for certain [drought assistance programs](#), like the [Livestock Forage Disaster Program](#) and [Emergency Haying or Grazing on Conservation Reserve Program acres](#) and to "fast-track" [Secretarial drought disaster designations](#).

### Fact #2 - U.S. Drought Monitor is made with more than precipitation data.

When you think about drought, you probably think about water, or the lack of it. Precipitation plays a major role in the creation of the Drought Monitor, but the map's author considers [numerous indicators](#), including [drought impacts](#) and local insight from over 450 expert observers around the country. Authors use several dozen indicators to assess drought, including precipitation, stream-flow, reservoir levels, temperature and evaporative demand, soil moisture and vegetation health. Because the drought monitor depicts both short and long-term drought conditions, the authors must look at data for multiple timeframes. The final map produced each week represents a summary of the story being told by all the pieces of data. To help tell that story, authors don't just look at data. They converse over the course of the map-making week with experts across the country and draw information about drought impacts from media reports and private citizens.

### Fact #3 - A real person, using real data, updates the map.

Each week's map author, not a computer, processes and analyzes data to update the drought monitor. The [map authors](#) are trained climatologists or meteorologists from the National Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (the academic partner and website host of the Drought Monitor), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and USDA. The author's job is to do what a computer can't – use their expertise to reconcile the sometimes-conflicting stories told by each stream of data into a single assessment.

### Fact #4 - The Drought Monitor provides a current snapshot, not a forecast.

The Drought Monitor is a "snapshot" of conditions observed during the most recent week and builds off the previous week's map. The map is released on Thursdays and depicts conditions based on data for the week that ended the preceding Tuesday. Rain that falls on the Wednesday just before the USDM's release won't be reflected until the next map is published. This provides a consistent, week-to-week product and gives the author a window to assess the data and come up with a final map.

### Fact #5 – Your input can be part of the drought-monitoring process.

State climatologists and other trained observers in the drought monitoring network relay on-the-ground information from numerous sources to the US Drought monitor author each week. That can include information that you contribute.

The Drought Monitor serves as a trigger for multiple forms of federal disaster relief for agricultural producers, and sometimes producers contact the author to suggest that drought conditions in their area are worse than what the latest drought monitor shows. When the author gets a call like that, it prompts them to look closely at all available data for that area, to see whether measurements of precipitation, temperature, soil moisture and other indicators corroborate producer-submitted reports. This is the process that authors follow whether they receive one report or one hundred reports, although reports from more points may help state officials and others know where to look for impacts.

There are multiple ways to contribute your observations:

- **Talk to your state climatologist** - Find the current list at the [American Association of State Climatologists](#) website.
- **Email** - Emails sent to [droughtmonitor@unl.edu](mailto:droughtmonitor@unl.edu) inform the USDM authors.
- **Become a CoCoRaHS observer** - Submit drought reports along with daily precipitation observations to the [Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network](#).
- **Submit Condition Monitoring Observer Reports (CMOR)** - [go.unl.edu/CMOR](http://go.unl.edu/CMOR).

For more information, read our [Ask the Expert blog with a NDMC climatologist](#) or visit [farmers.gov/protection-recovery](http://farmers.gov/protection-recovery).

## 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](#)

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Park County FSA Office  
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**Submit Loan Requests for Financing Early**

Farm Service Agency is already working on operating loans for spring 2023 and asks potential borrowers to submit their requests early so they can be timely processed. The farm loan team can help determine which loan programs are best for applicants.

FSA offers a wide range of low-interest loans that can meet the financial needs of any farm operation for just about any purpose. The traditional farm operating and farm ownership loans can help large and small farm operations take advantage of early purchasing discounts for spring inputs as well expenses throughout the year.

Microloans are a simplified loan program that will provide up to \$50,000 for both Farm Ownership and Operating Microloans to eligible applicants. These loans, targeted for smaller and non-traditional operations, can be used for operating expenses, starting a new operation, purchasing equipment, and other needs associated with a farming operation. Loans to beginning farmers and members of under-served groups are a priority.

Other types of loans available include:

Marketing Assistance Loans allow producers to use eligible commodities as loan collateral and obtain a 9-month loan while the crop is in storage. These loans provide cash flow to the producer and allow them to market the crop when prices may be more advantageous.

Farm Storage Facility Loans can be used to build permanent structures used to store eligible commodities, for storage and handling trucks, or portable or permanent handling equipment. A variety of structures are eligible under this loan, including bunker silos, grain bins, hay storage structures, and refrigerated structures for vegetables and fruit. A producer may borrow up to \$500,000 per loan.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting should contact Darla Rhodes at 307-754-9411 extension 2 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.