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## Courtney's Corner- CED Comments, Upcoming Deadlines, and a Few Jokes

Hello Sheridan and Johnson Counties! It is certainly hard to believe that we are already halfway through November.

We are so excited to announce that the construction along Sugarland Drive is mostly completed and we now have access in both directions to the building. Feel free to come on in next time you are in Sheridan!



As we head into winter and colder temperatures, please remember to take pictures of any dead animals and keep good records. The LIP program is one that requires extensive records and proof of death. If you have any questions about what kinds of documentation you might need, please give us a visit or a call.

Finally, Johnson County producers- we are bringing back our Buffalo work days. **Our next Buffalo work day will be December 6, 2023.**

-CY

### **Upcoming Deadlines/ Dates:**

November 15- Fall Planted Crop (Winter Wheat) Acreage Reporting Deadline

November 23- Office Closed- Thanksgiving

December 1- NAP Application for Coverage Deadline for Perennial Grasses and Fall Planted Crops

December 4- Deadline to return COC election ballots for LAA's 1 & 5

December 25- Office Closed- Christmas

### **A Few Jokes to Brighten Your Day-**

What do sweet potatoes wear to bed? Yammies.

What kind of key can never open doors? A tur-key.

Why did the farmer have to separate the chicken and the turkey? He sensed fowl play.

What do you call a sad cranberry? A blueberry.

Why did the policeman crash Thanksgiving dinner? To stop people from going over the feed limit.

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## USDA Reminds Farmers and Ranchers to Vote in the Sheridan/Johnson County Committee Election

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has started mailing ballots for the Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committee elections to eligible farmers and ranchers across the country. To be counted, ballots must be returned to the Sheridan/Johnson County FSA office or postmarked by Dec. 4, 2023.



“FSA county committee members provide valuable knowledge and judgment as decisions are made about the services we provide, including disaster and safety-net programs,” said Courtney Yelton, county executive director for Sheridan/Johnson County. “Please take a few minutes to review your ballot and make your selection prior to the Dec. 4 deadline.”

Each committee has from three to 11 elected members who serve three-year terms of office, and at least one seat is up for election each year for a certain Local Administrative Area (LAA). Newly elected committee members will take office Jan. 1, 2024. Sheridan/Johnson County committee members help FSA make important decisions on its commodity support programs, conservation programs, indemnity and disaster programs, emergency programs and eligibility.

The following producers have been nominated and are running in the 2024 election in LAA 1 and LAA 5, which includes Sheridan and Johnson County are JD Hill and Joni Harlan.

JD Hill is nominated in LAA 1 to serve as a committee member for a 3-year term. Hill resides north of Ranchester on Early Creek and has a small acreage property where he raises horses and puts up hay. JD has been the Livestock Manager for the Padlock Ranch for the past 8 years with a total of 13 years at the Padlock Ranch.

He currently serves as a member on the Sheridan County Weed and Pest Board, is a member of Farm Bureau and served as the Region 1 Vice-President for the Wyoming Stock Growers Association.

Joni Harlan has also been nominated in LAA 5 to serve as a committee member for a 3-year term. Harlan resides in Kaycee and for the past 25 years, Joni has resided on the Harlan Ranch, which produces alfalfa hay with small grains as rotation crops, a cow-calf operation, feeder lambs and butcher pigs.

She is an active member of the Barnum Women’s Club, Jarrard Park Foundation and Kaycee Community Foundation and serves as Treasurer of each of these organizations. In addition to ranch life, she has worked for the Wyoming Department of Transportation for over 25 years as a fiscal consultant for the public transit program.

Producers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program to be eligible to vote in the county committee election. A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation to FSA, even if they have not applied or received program benefits. Also, for county committee elections, producers who are not of legal voting age, but supervise and conduct the farming operations of an entire farm, are eligible to vote.

Producers can find out if their LAA is up for election and if they are eligible to vote by contacting their local FSA county office. Customers can locate their LAA through a new GIS locator tool available at [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections). Eligible voters who do not receive a ballot in the mail can request one from the Sheridan/Johnson County FSA office at 1949 Sugarland Drive, Ste 126 or call (307) 683-4202.

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## NAP Coverage for 2024

The Farm Service Agency’s (FSA) Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) helps you manage risk through coverage for both crop losses and crop planting that was prevented due to natural disasters. The eligible or “noninsured” crops include agricultural commodities not covered by federal crop insurance.

*You must be enrolled in the program and have purchased coverage for the eligible crop in the crop year in which the loss incurred to receive program benefits following a qualifying natural disaster.*

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](https://fsa.usda.gov/nap) or contact your local USDA Service Center at (307) 683-4202.

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## Loans for Targeted Underserved Producers

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has several loan programs to help you start or continue an agriculture operation. Farm ownership and operating loans are available.

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, FSA has provided priority funding for members of targeted underserved applicants.

A targeted underserved applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities.

For purposes of this program, targeted underserved groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.



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## Producers Encouraged to Apply Now for USDA Conservation Programs

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is encouraging agricultural producers and forest landowners to participate in voluntary conservation programs and adopt climate-smart practices in fiscal year 2024 as part of President Biden's Investing in America agenda. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is accepting applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), which help a wide variety of producers, including urban and organic producers.



For fiscal year 2024, NRCS has \$3 billion in Inflation Reduction Act funds to invest in [climate-smart mitigation activities](#). This year, NRCS expanded the list of those activities as well as expanded priority areas for ACEP for grasslands, wetlands and farmlands at risk of conversion. Learn more about those expansions in our [Sept. 28, 2023 news release](#).

Additionally, for fiscal year 2024, NRCS has over \$2 billion in Farm Bill funding available to producers for priorities like organic and urban agriculture, soil health, water quality and quantity and wildlife habitat development. This extensive amount of funding will be used to meet producer demand for our

oversubscribed programs, maximize climate benefits and help producers address their natural resource challenges.

NRCS accepts producer applications for its conservation programs year-round. To apply for fiscal year 2024 funding, apply by your [state's ranking date](#) by contacting your [local NRCS office](#).



## Sheridan USDA Service Center

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### County Committee:

John Buyok- Chair  
Gerry Miller- Vice-Chair  
Ray Daly- Voting Member  
Trevor Lutterman- Voting Member  
Joni Harlan- Voting Member