



- [CED's Corner](#)
- [USDA Announces General Conservation Reserve Program Signups for 2023](#)
- [Keeping Livestock Inventory Records](#)
- [USDA Microloans Help Farmers Purchase Farmland and Improve Property this heading.](#)
- [NRCS Refines Nutrient Management Strategies to Improve Conservation Outcomes](#)

CED's Corner

April Fools to Wyoming – 50 degrees on Saturday and Sunday...to buried (literally) in some places with record breaking snowfall. When we have weather events like this it always is a cause for concern for our families and our livestock. If you have losses, please contact the office as soon as possible. We Might be able to help.



The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) has recently had some updates to policy and procedure.

- Eligible livestock now reads: Removes the recreational restriction and now considers livestock that contribute to the commercial viability of an operation and are maintained for the purposes of pleasure, roping, pets, or show, by an owner, lessee, or contract grower covered livestock for eligible losses under LIP. All other eligible animals are listed in 1-LIP, subparagraph 24A.

Note: The change does not include livestock used for hunting and consumption by owner. They are ineligible livestock for LIP.

- Livestock used or intended to be used for racing or wagering are ineligible livestock for LIP.

The Livestock Forage Program (LFP) updated as well for 2022 LFP and subsequent years the following changes have been made to covered livestock.

- Removes the restriction of ostriches which are now determined to be eligible grazing animals for LFP.

Removes the recreational restriction and now considers livestock that contribute to the commercial viability of an operation and are maintained for the purposes of pleasure, roping, pets, or show eligible grazing animals and covered livestock for LFP. Animals must be weaned livestock as of the date of qualifying drought or fire.

Note: The change does not include livestock used for hunting and consumption by owner. They are ineligible livestock for LFP.

Livestock used or intended to be used for racing or wagering are ineligible livestock for LFP.

Okay, so we have some snow...does this mean we are out of the drought? Good question! We are continuing to monitor the soil moisture and working with NOAA and the University of Wyoming folks to keep a more accurate record of our county. YOU can help us with this! IF you want to have accurate drought monitoring, YOU can help by uploading your specific ranch location situation. Call the office to learn more.

Grassland CRP signups have not been announced yet. See the article below to learn more about this program.

IMPORTANT DATES

April 12th – DEADLINE to Order Trees from the Natural Resource Districts in Sundance & Newcastle

May 29th – Office CLOSED – Memorial Day Observed

June 2nd – DEADLINE to sign up for ERP Phase II and PARP

June 19th – Office CLOSED – Juneteenth

July 4th – Office CLOSED – 4th of July

July 17th – DEADLINE for Spring Crop Acreage Reporting

Very Sincerely,
Staci L. Green-Steiner, Acting CED

USDA Announces General Conservation Reserve Program Signups for 2023

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that agricultural producers and private landowners can begin applying for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) General signup starting **February 27 through April 7, 2023**. CRP is a cornerstone voluntary conservation program offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and a key tool in the Biden-Harris administration's effort to address climate change and help agricultural communities invest in the long-term well-being of their land and natural resources.



Producers and landowners enrolled more than 5 million acres into CRP through signups in 2022, building on the acceptance of more than 3.1 million acres in the [largest Grassland CRP signup in history](#). There are currently 23 million acres enrolled in CRP, with 1.9 million set to expire this year. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is aiming to reach the 27-million-acre cap statutorily set for fiscal year 2023.

General CRP

General CRP helps producers and landowners establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees, to control soil erosion, improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat on cropland. Additionally, General CRP includes a Climate-Smart Practice Incentive to help increase carbon sequestration and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by helping producers and landowners establish trees and permanent grasses, enhance wildlife habitat, and restore wetlands.

Continuous CRP

Under Continuous CRP, producers and landowners can enroll in CRP throughout the year. Offers are automatically accepted provided the producer and land meet the eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the statutory cap. The Climate-Smart Practice Incentive is also available in the Continuous signup.

FSA offers several additional enrollment opportunities within Continuous CRP, including the Clean Lakes Estuaries and Rivers Initiative (CLEAR30), the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Initiative, the Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP), and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). The CLEAR30 Initiative, which was originally piloted in twelve states in the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay watershed, has been expanded nationwide, allowing producers and landowners to enroll in 30-year CRP contracts for water quality practices. Under this administration, FSA also moved SAFE practices back to the Continuous CRP signup, giving producers and landowners more opportunities to participate in the initiative. Through the FWP, producers and landowners can enroll land in CRP as part of their efforts to restore previously farmed wetlands and wetland buffers, to improve both vegetation and water flow.

This administration has also made significant improvements to CREP, which leverages federal and non-federal funds to target specific State, regional or nationally significant conservation concerns. Specifically, USDA made significant improvements to CREP to reduce barriers and make the program more accessible to a broad range of producers and new types of partners.

These updates included flexibility for partners to provide matching funds in the form of cash, in-kind contributions, or technical assistance, along with an investment in additional staff to work directly with partners. Through CREP, for the first time ever, three Tribal Nations are now partnering with USDA to help conserve, maintain, and improve grassland productivity, reduce soil erosion, and enhance wildlife habitat.

Grassland CRP

FSA will announce the dates for Grassland CRP signup in the coming weeks. Grassland CRP is a working lands program, helping landowners and operators protect grassland, including rangeland and pastureland and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as working grazing lands.

Protecting grasslands contributes positively to the economy of many regions, provides biodiversity of plant and animal populations, and provides important carbon sequestration benefits to deliver lasting climate outcomes.

How to Sign Up

Landowners and producers interested in CRP should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#) to learn more or to apply for the program before their deadlines.

Producers with expiring CRP acres can use the Transition Incentives Program (TIP), which incentivizes producers who sell or enter a long-term lease with a beginning, veteran, or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher who plans to sustainably farm or ranch the land.

More Information

Signed into law in 1985, CRP is one of the largest voluntary private-lands conservation programs in the United States. It was originally intended to primarily control soil erosion and potentially stabilize commodity prices by taking marginal lands out of production. The program has evolved over the years, providing many conservation and economic benefits.

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 your Crook County USDA Service Center at 307-283-2870 ext 2 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

USDA Microloans Help Farmers Purchase Farmland and Improve Property this heading.



Farmers can use USDA farm ownership microloans to buy and improve property. These microloans are especially helpful to beginning or underserved farmers, U.S. veterans looking for a career in farming, and those who have small and mid-sized farming operations.

Microloans have helped farmers and ranchers with operating costs, such as feed, fertilizer, tools, fencing, equipment, and living expenses since 2013.

Microloans can also help with farmland and building purchases and soil and water conservation improvements. FSA designed the expanded program to simplify the application process, expand eligibility requirements and expedite smaller real estate loans to help farmers strengthen their operations. Microloans provide up to \$50,000 to qualified producers and can be issued to the applicant directly from the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

To learn more about the FSA microloan program, contact Eilish Hanson at the Campbell County USDA Service Center at 307-682-8843 ext. 2 or visit fsa.usda.gov/microloans.

NRCS Refines Nutrient Management Strategies to Improve Conservation Outcomes

For decades, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has supported producers and landowners in addressing their nutrient management and water quality concerns. We continue to refine our strategies as we learn more, including from data in a [recent report on cropland conservation outcomes](#) from our [Conservation Effects Assessment Project](#).



This report showed that despite many wins in conservation outcomes, there was an [increase in soluble nitrogen and phosphorus lost to the environment nationally](#) over a ten-year period. This increase was due to many factors, including changing trends in production, climate, and technology. Preventing nutrients from fertilizers and other sources from entering local waters ensures that they can be utilized by crops and benefits both water quality and farmer finances.

These findings can help NRCS more effectively support farmers nationwide by refining applied conservation to address site-specific risk for nutrient losses. In 2022, we developed a strategic operational plan to address these changing trends, enhancing our existing nutrient management conservation efforts. This plan includes promoting [SMART Nutrient Management](#) planning and highlighting the importance of comprehensive, site-specific assessment of nutrient loss risks.

The plan also includes several [science-based nutrient management and water quality strategies](#) for improving conservation outcomes, and NRCS continues to move this work forward. To date NRCS has:

- **Updated how producers can be paid for utilizing nutrient management related practices.** NRCS has allowed payments to producers for soil, source nutrient, and water testing. Testing is key to determine the proper rate of nutrient application. NRCS has also created new payment scenarios to more closely align with the technology that farmers are encouraged to adopt, including enhanced efficiency fertilizers and precision application technology, which can help ensure nutrients are available at the right time, the right rate and in the right place.
- **Initiated development of a new mapping tool to help conservation planners identify areas on the land that can be more sensitive to nutrient loss.** The Sensitive Area Analysis Tool uses soil survey data to show the areas of a field at risk for nutrient loss that can benefit from site-specific nutrient management plans and other practices that can help mitigate nutrient losses. The tool will be available for use in early 2023. Ask NRCS at your [local USDA Service Center](#) for details.

- **Updated manure testing protocols through an agreement with the University of Minnesota** ([Recommended Methods of Manure Analysis, Second Edition](#)). These new testing protocols for manure testing take management practices into account and deliver more accurate values specific to the farm. These protocols will be used to update NRCS nutrient management policy including laboratory testing procedures and determination of accredited laboratories.
- **Led an effort to create four new, long-term assessments to better understand the importance of legacy (historical) sources of nutrients, such as phosphorus and nitrate, as well as sediment.** Effective conservation options for addressing legacy sources are being evaluated. For example, NRCS is supporting a stakeholder-driven study of a perennial grass buffer to enhance plant uptake of legacy nutrients, reduce losses and improve on-farm nutrient cycling.

These and many other efforts are continuing in 2023 and beyond. The [Inflation Reduction Act](#) is providing NRCS with an additional \$19.5 billion over the next four years to help support climate-smart agricultural practices, including nutrient management. NRCS is targeting funding for nutrient management, increasing program flexibilities, and expanding partnerships to support the development and implementation of nutrient management plans. NRCS will keep partners and producers informed as we make further improvements and updates.



WESTON COUNTY USDA Service Center

1225 Washington Blvd.
Newcastle, WY 82701

Phone: 307-746-2701
Fax: 855-415-3437

FARM SERVICE AGENCY

Staci L. Green-Steiner
County Executive Director
Staci.steiner@usda.gov

NRCS

Paul Eitel
District Conservationist
paul.eitel@usda.gov

FSA PROGRAM TECHNICIANS

Jennifer Jones
Jennifer.jones4@usda.gov

Kayla Pederson, Weston Co.
Kayla.pederson@usda.gov

NRCS STAFF

Tanner Jenks, Rangeland Mgmt. Specialist
Tanner.jenks@usda.gov

Austin Sommerville, Forester
Austin.sommerville@usda.gov

COC MEMBERS

William Randy Oleson, Chairman
John Riesland, Vice Chairman
Harry Tavegia, Member

Weston County Natural Resource District

Caleb Carter
ccarter.wcnrd@gmail.com