



### In this newsletter:

- [A Message from the Weston County Executive Director](#)
- [FSA Encourages Farmers and Ranchers to Vote in County Committee Elections](#)
- [Is the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program Right for You?](#)
- [USDA to Provide More Than \\$3 Billion to Commodity and Specialty Crop Producers Impacted by 2022 Natural Disasters](#)
- [Planning your spring tree planting? WCNRD has new tools for you.](#)
- [Applying for Youth Loans](#)

---

## A Message from the Weston County Executive Director

It's the end of October and we had our first taste of winter. I refuse to complain about it though because we had such a beautiful, nice fall season. Hopefully, you transitioned to the colder weather without too many mishaps.

Fall always brings FSA county committee elections to our office. This year the representative for the Local Administrative Area (LAA) 1 is up for election. LAA 1 is located in the northeast area of our county. Not sure which LAA you are in? Farm Service Agency has a new locator tool for FSA customers to help you identify which LAA you are located in. This tool, along with instructions, can be found at [www.fsa.usda.gov/newsroom/county-committee-elections](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/newsroom/county-committee-elections).

Ballots for the election are being mailed out to FSA eligible voters starting November 6, 2023. Completed ballots are due back in the office or postmarked by **Monday, December 4, 2023**. If you have not received a ballot and believe you should have, please contact our office. We have extra ballots available to LAA 1 eligible voters. For more information on FSA County Committees and the election process, please see the article below.

For our producers who are planting acreage this fall, please contact our office to report your activity. Fall acreage reporting is due by **Wednesday, November 15, 2023**. We are also accepting production records for your 2023 harvests.

USDA just announced a new signup for producers who had agricultural losses due to natural disaster events in 2022. USDA will provide more than \$3 billion to commodity and specialty crop producers to help offset the financial impacts of crop yield and value losses from qualifying disasters occurring in 2022. See the article below for more information.

For our Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) participants who submitted livestock losses due to unexpected severe weather this past spring but have not submitted an application for payment, please contact our office to complete your application process. The deadline to complete this process is **Thursday, February 29, 2024**. For those of you who have already completed your payment application, we are working hard on getting them through the required reviews to ensure proper payments are made as timely as possible.

For our producers who submitted hay losses through the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) but have not signed an application for payment, please contact our office to complete your application process. The deadline to complete this process is **Friday, December 15, 2023**.

If you are interested in using NAP as a risk mitigation plan for your operation in 2024, the deadline to sign up for grazing and fall crop coverage is **Friday, December 1, 2023**. Spring crop coverage deadline is **Monday, April 1, 2024**. See the article below to see if this program is right for you and for the different available coverage options.

A note for our producers of Sainfoin: FSA has historically classified Sainfoin as a grass for both acreage reporting and NAP. Starting in the 2024 program year, FSA has reclassified Sainfoin as a legume with an intended use of Forage (FG), Grazing (GZ), Left Standing (LS), and Seed (SD). For acreage reporting, this change will be seamless as county office staff will be monitoring the changes and update your continuously certified or certified acreage reports accordingly. For NAP coverage, although the crop name and code for your Sainfoin NAP coverage has changed, your continuous coverage remains the same and you will not owe any additional service fees. Sainfoin will continue to fall under the same Grass pay groups it was previously under. We will also be monitoring this change on your NAP policy and update it accordingly. For NAP approved production history, we will be manually updating your 2024 NAP approved yield. We will contact you when we make any required updates. Some of these changes will require a new producer signature.

FSA has recently released additional payments to eligible producers in our county. FSA issued an additional top up payment for the 2021 Emergency Livestock Relief Program (ELRP) to assist with winter losses not originally accounted for in payments made in the spring of 2023. This program used information filed on the 2021 Livestock Forage Program (LFP) as a basis for ELRP. An additional payment was made for 2022 ELRP, using filed 2022 LFP information, to account for the unexpected surge in feed stuff costs. For 2020 and 2021 Emergency Relief Program (ERP) participants, payments have been sent out for the completed applications.

The other outstanding programs for our office include the Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program (PARP) and Emergency Conservation Program (ECP). We are still waiting for additional information and approval to release payments.

For anyone attending Trunk-or-Treat in Newcastle, please make sure you stop at the trunk being sponsored by the Weston County Natural Resource District and say "hi."

Also, a little tidbit I learned this past week, the appropriate height to cut your lawn in preparation for winter is 3-4 inches.

If you have any questions or concerns, always know you can reach out to me, my office staff, or our committee members.

Take care and stay safe!

*Sherie Hilgenkamp*  
*Weston County Executive Director*

---

## UPCOMING DEADLINES & IMPORTANT DATES

- **October 31, 2023:** Signup begins for ERP 2022.
- **November 1, 2023:** The office will be closed, but staff will still be available to take phone calls.
- **November 6, 2023:** Ballots for COC Election in LAA 1 will be mailed out to eligible voters Monday.
- **November 7, 2023:** WCNRD meeting at 3pm (change from normal date)
- **November 11, 2023:** Office closed in observance of Veteran's Day.

- **November 15, 2023:** Fall acreage reporting deadline on Wednesday. This is also a good time to turn in your 2023 hay production.
- **November 23, 2023:** Office closed in observance of Thanksgiving.
- **December 1, 2023:** Deadline to sign up for program year 2024 NAP coverage and pay the customer service fee.
- **December 4, 2023:** LAA 1 Ballots due at the county office or be postmarked by.
- **December 11, 2023:** Weston County Committee Ballot Counting at 1pm followed by business meeting.
- **December 15, 2023:** Deadline to submit an application for payment on program year 2023 hay losses.

Also remember the following:

**NAP Notice of Loss** must be filed the earlier of 15 days of the disaster occurrence or when losses become apparent, or 15 days of the final harvest date.

**LIP Notice of Loss** must be filed 30 calendar days of when the loss is first apparent. **Leases and/or Land Ownership changes including operational changes** must be reported within 30 calendar days of change to avoid late fees, repayment of funds issued and/or ineligibility for program participation. The deadline to submit changes for 2023 program year has closed. For the 2024 program year the deadline for all changes is August 1, 2024.

## FSA Encourages Farmers and Ranchers to Vote in County Committee Elections



County committee members are an important component of the operations of FSA and provide a link between the agricultural community and USDA. Farmers and ranchers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity price support programs; conservation programs; incentive, indemnity and disaster programs for some commodities;

emergency programs and eligibility. FSA committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must:

- Be of legal voting age or, if not of legal voting age, supervise and conduct the farming operation of an entire farm.
- Have an interest in a farm or ranch as either:
  - An individual who meets one or more of the following:
    - Is eligible and capable to vote in one's own right.
    - Is a partner of a general partnership.
    - Is a member of a joint venture.

- Participates or cooperates in any FSA program that is provided by law. A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information to FSA about their farming or ranching operation(s) but may not have applied or received program benefits.

Ballots are being mailed to voters in Local Administrative Area (LAA) 1 on November 6, 2023. The deadline to return ballots to local FSA offices, or to be postmarked, is December 4, 2023.

Eligible voters in Local Administrative Area 1, who do not receive a ballot can obtain one from their local FSA county office. Customers can identify which LAA they or their farming operation is in by using our new GIS locator tool available at [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections).

Newly elected committee members will take office January 1, 2024.

The candidate in this year's election is:

Harry Tavegia is nominated in LAA 1, Weston County, to serve as a committee member for a 3-year term. Harry has lived in LAA 1 for 62 years and operated his ranch for over 40 years, producing cattle, hay, and grain. He has served on the Inyan Kara Grazing Association Board, served as Chairman of the Soil Conservation Board as well as being a former Chairman of our County Committee, of which he is a current member. Harry will fairly and equitably represent producers and ensure the farmers and ranchers of our community get the most out of Farm Programs. Harry is willing to serve if re-elected.

---

## Is the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program Right for You?

Farmers and ranchers rely on crop insurance to protect themselves from disasters and unforeseen events, but not all crops are insurable through the USDA's Risk Management Agency. The Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides producers another option to obtain coverage against disaster for these crops. NAP provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops impacted by natural disasters that result in lower yields, crop losses, or prevents crop planting.

Commercially produced crops and agricultural commodities for which crop insurance is not available are generally eligible for NAP. Eligible crops include those grown specifically for food, fiber, livestock consumption, biofuel or biobased products, or value loss crops such as aquaculture, Christmas trees, ornamental nursery, and others. Contact your local FSA office to see which crops are eligible in your state and county.

Eligible causes of loss include drought, freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind or hurricanes, earthquake and flood. These events must occur during the NAP policy coverage period, before or during harvest, and the disaster must directly affect the eligible crop. For guidance on causes of loss not listed, contact your local FSA county office.

Interested producers apply for NAP coverage using FSA form [CCC-471](#), "Application for Coverage," and pay the applicable service fee at the FSA office where their farm records are maintained. These must be filed by the application closing date, which varies by crop. Contact your local FSA office to verify application closing dates and ensure coverage for eligible NAP crops.

At the time of application, each producer acknowledges they have received the [NAP Basic Provisions](#), which describes NAP requirements for coverage. NAP participants must report crop acreage shortly after planting and provide verifiable or reliable crop production records when required by FSA.

Producers are required to pay service fees which vary depending on the number of crops and number of counties your operation is located in. The NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per administrative county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple

counties. Premiums also apply when producers elect higher levels of coverage with a maximum premium of \$15,750 per person or legal entity.

A producer's certification on Form CCC-860 *Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification* may serve as an application for basic NAP coverage for all eligible crops beginning with crop year 2022. These producers will have all NAP-related service fees for basic coverage waived, in addition to a 50 percent premium reduction if higher levels of coverage are elected.

For more detailed information on NAP, download the [NAP Fact Sheet](#). To get started with NAP, we recommend you contact your [local USDA service center](#).

---

## USDA to Provide More Than \$3 Billion to Commodity and Specialty Crop Producers Impacted by 2022 Natural Disasters



The U. S Department of Agriculture (USDA) will provide more than \$3 billion to commodity and specialty crop producers impacted by natural disaster events in 2022. Eligible impacted producers can apply for financial assistance through the [Emergency Relief Program \(ERP\) 2022](#). The program will help offset the financial impacts of crop yield and value losses from qualifying disasters occurring in 2022.

### Background

On Dec. 29, 2022, President Biden signed into law the *Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2023 (P.L. 117-328)* that provides about \$3.7 billion in financial assistance for agricultural producers impacted by eligible natural disasters that occurred in calendar year 2022.

ERP 2022 covers losses to crops, trees, bushes and vines due to qualifying, calendar year 2022 natural disaster events including wildfires, hurricanes, floods, derechos, excessive heat, tornadoes, winter storms, freeze (including a polar vortex), smoke exposure, excessive moisture, qualifying drought and related conditions.

ERP 2022 program benefits will be delivered to eligible producers through a two-track process. FSA intends to make both tracks available to producers at the same time. This two-track approach enables USDA to:

- Streamline the application process.
- Reduce the paperwork burden on producers.
- Proactively include provisions for underserved producers who have not been well served by past emergency relief efforts.
- Encourage producer participation in existing risk management programs to mitigate the impacts of future severe weather events.

It's important to note that disaster-impacted producers may be eligible for ERP 2022 assistance under one or both tracks. To avoid duplicative benefits, if a producer applies for both tracks, the Track 2 payment calculation will take into account any payments received through Track 1.

### ERP 2022 Application Process – Track 1

ERP 2022 Track 1 leverages existing federal crop insurance or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) data as the basis for calculating payments for eligible crop producers who received

indemnities through these risk management programs. Although FSA is sending pre-filled ERP 2022 Track 1 application forms to producers who have crop insurance and NAP data already on file with USDA, producers indemnified for losses resulting from 2022 natural disasters do not have to wait to receive the application before requesting ERP 2022 assistance. Effective Oct. 31, 2023, producers can apply for ERP 2022 benefits whether they have received the pre-filled application or not. Receipt of a pre-filled application is not confirmation that a producer is eligible to receive an ERP 2022 Track 1 payment.

USDA estimates that ERP Track 1 benefits will reach more than 206,000 producers who received indemnities for losses covered by federal crop insurance and more than 4,500 producers who obtained NAP coverage for the 2022 crop year.

## **ERP 2022 Application Process – Track 2**

Track 2 is a revenue-based certification program designed to assist eligible producers who suffered an eligible decrease in revenue resulting from 2022 calendar year disaster events when compared with revenue in a benchmark year using revenue information that is readily available from most tax records. In cases where revenue does not reasonably reflect a normal year's revenue, Track 2 provides an alternative method for establishing revenue. Likewise, Track 2 affords producers of crops that are used within an operation and do not generate revenue from the sale of the crop a method for establishing revenue for the purpose of applying for ERP 2022 benefits. Producers are not required to submit tax records to FSA unless requested by the County Committee if required for an FSA compliance spot check.

Although not required when applying for ERP 2022 Track 2, applicants might find the following documents useful to the process:

- Schedule F (Form 1040)
- *Profit or Loss from Farming* or similar tax documents for tax years 2018, 2019, 2022 and 2023.

Track 2 targets gaps in emergency relief assistance for eligible producers whose eligible losses were not covered by crop insurance or NAP including revenue losses too small (shallow loss) to be covered by crop insurance.

Producers interested in applying for ERP 2022 Track 2, should contact their local FSA county office. Additional reference resources can be found on FSA's [emergency relief website](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/emergency-relief/index). <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/emergency-relief/index>

## **Additional Required Forms**

For both ERP 2022 tracks, all producers must have certain required forms on file with FSA within 60 days of the ERP 2022 deadline. Producers can apply for ERP 2022 starting Oct. 31, 2023. The application deadline has not yet been determined and will be announced at a later date. If not already on file, producers can update, complete and submit required forms to FSA at any time.

Required forms:

- Form AD-2047, *Customer Data Worksheet*.
- Form CCC-902, *Farm Operating Plan* for an individual or legal entity.
- Form CCC-901, *Member Information for Legal Entities* (if applicable).
- Form FSA-510, *Request for an Exception to the \$125,000 Payment Limitation for Certain Programs* (if applicable).
- Form CCC-860, *Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification*, if applicable, for the 2022 program year.

- A highly erodible land conservation (sometimes referred to as HELC) and wetland conservation certification (Form AD-1026 *Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELIC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification*) for the ERP producer and applicable affiliates.

Most producers, especially those who have previously participated in FSA programs, will likely have these required forms on file. However, those who are uncertain or want to confirm the status of their forms can contact their local FSA county office.

### Future Insurance Coverage Requirements

All producers who receive ERP 2022 payments must purchase crop insurance, or NAP coverage where crop insurance is not available, in the next two available crop years as determined by the Secretary. Purchased coverage must be at the 60/100 coverage level or higher for insured crops or at the catastrophic coverage level or higher for NAP crops.

### More Information

ERP 2022 eligibility details and payment calculation factor tables are available on the [emergency relief website](#), in the [ERP Track 1](#) and [ERP Track 2](#) fact sheets and through your local [FSA county office](#).

---

## Planning your spring tree planting? WCNRD has new tools for you.

We are accepting orders for the

# 2024 SEEDLING TREE SALE

Order and pay online, pick up a paper order form at the WCNRD office or download one from our website.

[www.westoncountynrd.org/shop/](http://www.westoncountynrd.org/shop/) [www.westoncountynrd.org/seedling-tree-sale/](http://www.westoncountynrd.org/seedling-tree-sale/)

---

## Applying for Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) makes loans to youth to establish and operate agricultural income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5,000.

## Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

- Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien
- Be 10 years to 20 years of age
- Comply with FSA's general eligibility requirements
- Be unable to get a loan from other sources
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the youth loan applicant, along with providing adequate supervision.

For help preparing the application forms, contact the Weston County FSA Office at (307) 746-27401 extension 2 or talk to our loan personnel at the Campbell County USDA Service Center at 307-682-8843 or visit [fsa.usda.gov](http://fsa.usda.gov).

---

## Save Time - Make an Appointment with NRCS and FSA Offices

Producers are encouraged to call ahead to schedule an appointment. Appointments ensure maximum use of your time and ensure staff is available to tend to your important business needs. To contact your agency, use the information below.



## Weston County USDA Service Center

### FSA Office

1225 Washington Blvd., Ste. 2  
Newcastle, WY 82701

Phone: 307-746-2701 ext. 2  
Fax: 855-415-3437

### Farm Loan Manager:

Eilish Hanson  
307-696-4459  
[eilish.hanson@usda.gov](mailto:eilish.hanson@usda.gov)

### County Executive Director:

Sherie Hilgenkamp  
[sherie.hilgenkamp@usda.gov](mailto:sherie.hilgenkamp@usda.gov)

### NRCS Office

1225 Washington Blvd., Ste. 3  
Newcastle, WY 82701

Phone: 307-746-3264  
Fax: 866-574-1366

### District Conservationist:

Paul Eitel  
[paul.eitel@usda.gov](mailto:paul.eitel@usda.gov)

### Acting District Conservationist:

John "Morgan" Elsom  
[john.elsom@usda.gov](mailto:john.elsom@usda.gov)

### NWTF Co-Operative Forester:

Austin Sommerville [austin.sommerville@usda.gov](mailto:austin.sommerville@usda.gov)



**Program Technicians:**

Jennifer Jones  
[jennifer.jones4@usda.gov](mailto:jennifer.jones4@usda.gov)

Kayla Pederson  
[kayla.pederson@usda.gov](mailto:kayla.pederson@usda.gov)

**FSA County Committee:**

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

**Next County Committee Meeting:**  
TBD

**WCNRD Manager:**

Caleb Carter  
[ccarter.wcnrd@gmail.com](mailto:ccarter.wcnrd@gmail.com)

**WCNRD Board:**

David Tysdal, Chairman, Rural Supervisor  
Tucker Hamilton, Vice Chairman, Rural Supervisor  
Emily Hartinger, Secretary/Treasurer, Rural Supervisor  
Gene Norman, Urban Supervisor  
Tom Streeter, At-Large Supervisor

**WCNRD Board Meetings** are held 3pm the second Tuesday of the month at the Weston County USDA Service Center