



United States Department of Agriculture Niobrara County Service Center

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Niobrara Conservation District

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January 2008

County Committee Meeting Dates

The Niobrara County Committee regularly scheduled meeting dates will be the third Thursday of each month, at 11:30 am at the Niobrara USDA Service Center.

Crop Reporting Requirements

Please remember that filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs. Failed acreage must be reported within 15 days of the disaster event and **before** disposition of the crop. Prevented planting must be reported no later than 15 days after the final planting date. Acreage reports are required if you want to be eligible for many Farm Service Agency programs. The deadline to certify acreage is June 30.

Wool and Mohair LDPs

Producers who file for a Loan Deficiency Payment for their wool or mohair, must sign a CCC-633EZ (page 1) before they lose beneficial interest in the crop. Producers can then submit an LDP request (CCC-633EZ page 2) for benefits at any time during the LDP availability period before or after losing beneficial interest. The crop year for wool, mohair, and unshorn pelts begins on January 1st and runs through December 31st.

LCP/CDP Signup Continues

Signup for the Livestock Compensation Program and the Crop Disaster Program continues. No ending date has been announced, but we recommend that you complete your application as soon as possible.

Controlled Substance

Any person who is convicted under federal or state law of a controlled substance violation could be ineligible for USDA payments or benefits. Violations include planting, harvesting or growing a prohibited plant. Prohibited plants include marijuana, opium, poppies and other drug producing plants.

IRS Reporting

Producers who have received payments from FSA in 2006 should have also received a CCC-1099-G from the Kansas City office. A 1099-G is a report to the Internal Revenue Service about FSA payments made to you in calendar year 2006. These forms should have been received during the last week in January. If you received payment and did not receive a 1099-G, please contact the county office.

Power of Attorney

For those who find it difficult to visit the county office personally because of work schedules, distance, health, etc., we have a power of attorney form available that enables you to designate another person to conduct your business at the office. If you are interested, please contact our office or any Farm Service Agency office near you for more information. If you want a crop loan, a power of attorney form will need to be completed for husband and wife, if both do not come into the office to sign the forms on the day the loan is disbursed.

Spousal Signatures

Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office staff by either spouse.

Payment Limitation/Eligibility

Program participants are reminded of the requirements to timely and accurately file payment limitation forms. USDA payments and benefits are subject to producer eligibility and limitation provisions as defined by law. Documents and forms to determine eligibility and limitation once completed are reviewed on an annual basis. It is the producer's responsibility to report changes in the farming operation which may affect payment eligibility and payment limitation. Entities such as corporations, limited partnerships, trusts and estates are required to provide names, addresses, and ID numbers of their members. The members of entities are required to designate which permitted entities are to receive USDA benefits. Spouses may be considered as separate "persons" for payment limitation purposes if applicable requirements are met.

Sodbuster/Swampbuster

Most FSA programs require compliance with sodbuster and swampbuster provisions. The Sodbuster provisions require producers to follow an approved conservation plan on all highly erodible land planted to an annual crop as determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Be sure to have determinations made on any new land you plan to plant to annual crops. If you plan to plant a different crop on your current cropland, check with NRCS to assure the new crop will qualify under your conservation plan.

Swampbuster provisions state that converting a wetland to make possible the planting of a crop will result in the loss of all USDA benefits. To avoid this possibility it is strongly recommended that producers check with NRCS before starting to work in the fields.

Loans for Socially Disadvantaged Producers

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) can make and guarantee loans to socially disadvantaged applicants to buy and operate family size farms and ranches. Funds specifically for these loans are reserved each year. A socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of the group without regard to their individual qualities. For purposes of this program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African Americans, American Indians and Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, and Asians and Pacific Islanders. Farmers and ranchers that intend to apply to the Farm Service Agency for loan assistance for the upcoming crop year are encouraged to file their applications as early as possible. Filing early will help ensure that your loan is processed and approved as early as possible so that planting decisions can be made. Failure to apply early can result in a delay in processing loans due to the volume of applications that must be processed in date order. Contact your local FSA farm loan manager or officer for more details and assistance in applying.

NONINSURED ASSISTANCE PROGRAM REMINDER

Producers with NAP coverage in 2007 must provide production evidence for mechanically harvested crops prior to June 30, 2008.

Niobrara Conservation District News and Notes

Wildlife Escape Ramps Available

Through a statewide grant from the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust, the Wyoming Private Grazing Lands Team and the local Sage Grouse Working Groups, ranchers in Niobrara County can receive **five** fiberglass or expanded metal escape ramps to be installed into livestock drinking tanks. These ramps are placed in the tank so that birds, rabbits, Sage grouse and other small mammals can escape death from drowning. Ramps are in stock and available for you to pick up at the office free of charge— Don't delay – first come, first served. Photos of your ramp installed are greatly appreciated and needed for our report to the Trust.

TREE ORDERS DUE!

Spring is fast approaching and tree orders are due by April 15th. Just call and let us know what kind, how big or how much you want to spend and we will find the right tree, shrub or perennial for you. The District orders from seven different nurseries and things can range from \$1 to \$500 depending on your needs. Order one or one hundred. Gift certificates and memorial planting sites are also available.



Resource Library Gains Books

Check them out today!

The Niobrara Conservation District is proud to offer the following books for check out at our office

- ❖ "Gardeners of Eden" by Dan Dagget
- ❖ "At Home with Holistic Management" by Anne
- ❖ "Stockmanship" by Steve Cote
- ❖ "Improving Whole Farm Planning Through Better Decision Making"

A copy of "Stockmanship" has also been donated to the Niobrara County Library in celebration of Ag Week.

Grants Further Programs and Mill Levy Dollars

The District has been successful in obtaining numerous grants this year for programs which is matched by the mill levy funds the district receives from the county. This allows us to expand our programs and utilize the mill to its maximum capacity. Grants achieved in 2007-8 include:

- ✓ WWNRT Reforestation Grant – This grant is in conjunction with the Niobrara Weed and Pest and will go to improve the habitat within the Cheyenne River Watershed where Salt Cedar and Russian olive have been removed. \$47,150.
- ✓ Wyoming State Forestry Education Grant – This grant is going to help get speakers and materials for the 1st annual Tree and Landscaping Show. The seminar will offer tree and landscaping information, planting materials and various vendors, speakers and learning opportunities. \$1,000.
- ✓ Wyoming Department of Ag Pesticide and Hazardous Waste Grant - This grant was used to reduce the cost of the Household Hazardous Waste Collection, reduce the amount of hazards into our landfill and increase public awareness on recycling. \$4,300
- ✓ WWNRT Wildlife Escape Grant – NCD administers this grant for the state to get wildlife escape ramps in all livestock tanks to prevent drowning of small mammals and birds.
- ✓ Wyoming Game & Fish Reforestation / Habitat Grant - This grant will go to further the habitat improvement in the Cheyenne River Watershed after the removal of Salt Cedar and Russian olive. \$8,000.

Recycling Collection Bins Arrive

The Town of Lusk and the Niobrara Conservation District co-sponsored a new recycling collection bin. The large marked bins will serve as another location for folks to drop off recyclables. News papers, milk jugs, tin cans, aluminum cans and card board can be dropped into the bins at any time. For ease of removal, you are asked to leave the items in the paper or plastic bag you brought it in. Flatten cardboard as much as possible. Darrel Deuel will continue to run the center as well as this new collection site. The collection bins are at the USDA Service Center at 905 S. Main and may be moved to Decker's later in the year. Recycling is not only good for the environment and reduces costs at the landfill but it is the right thing to do. We are excited to be a part of this community effort.

"Conservation Beyond Boundaries"

The Black Hills Natural Resource Youth Camp has been designed to give youth the opportunity to experience the natural world and its resources through hands-on-activities. We hope that our participants will come away with a better understanding of natural resources, their use and conservation, gain more knowledge about the relationship between all the natural resources, learn some outdoor skills, gain an appreciation for the beauty and diversity of the natural world, and have tons of fun and meet new friends. This year's camp theme is "Conservation Beyond Boundaries" and once again will be held at Mallo Camp, north of Newcastle, WY in the Scenic Black Hills June 18-20th. Youth must be between the ages of 9 and 13 in order to attend. For more information please contact the office at 334-2953 x 101.

1st Annual Tree & Landscaping Show

The Niobrara Conservation District will sponsor a new event this Spring. The tree and landscaping show promises to be exciting, with several nursery vendors, knowledgeable speakers, tons of free information/educational materials and something for mom for Mothers Day. Since getting plants, trees and supplies is limited in the area, we are working to bring it to you.

Kicking off the show will be LEMS Students and their presentations on Arbor Day. Beginning at noon the K-5 students will share theatrical performances on trees. Throughout the day speakers will share their knowledge on Permaculture and Food Forests, Niobrara County Tough Trees, Landscaping Plants That Don't Need Love'n, Disease and Proper Pruning sessions are planned. A bus tour around town will showcase landscaping projects and disease problems.

Vendors include the Wyoming Plant Company, Pleasant Ridge Nursery, Niobrara Conservation District and the Scottsbluff Landscaping Co. Each vendor will have a booth of landscaping plants and trees for you to purchase. The Lusk Boy Scouts will be on hand to help out those in need.

Gift certificates are available in any amount for your mom for Mothers Day! Give her the gift on Friday and help her plant it on Sunday. ☺ Gift certificates are sold throughout the year as memorials, birthday gifts, as a thank you or just because.

Plan to attend – Friday May 9th from 12:00 p.m. until 7 p.m. at the Niobrara County Fairgrounds – we will be out back by the beef barn and show ring.



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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Niobrara County FSA Office

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