



United States Department of Agriculture

Niobrara County Service Center

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David Lengel, FLM

June 2008

County Committee Nominations Open for LAA #1

Nominations of candidates for the Farm Service Agency county committee election representing producers in Local Administrative Area (LAA) number 1 will be accepted through August 1, 2008. Producers who are eligible to vote in LAA 1 and who participate or cooperate in an FSA program and are of legal voting age may be nominated to serve on the county committee. Organizations representing socially disadvantaged minorities and women farmers or ranchers and beginning farmers are encouraged to nominate candidates. LAA 1 includes the southwestern portion of Niobrara County located in Townships 31-34 and Ranges 64-67. **Nominating petitions are available from this office.** Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters by November 3, and must be returned to the FSA county office or postmarked by December 3, 2007.

Shawn Bruegger is completing his third consecutive term on the county committee, this is the maximum allowed by FSA policy, so he will not be able to seek reelection. Thank you, Shawn, for your service to the producers of Niobrara County.

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 has been extended to August 15th; however we encourage you to report as soon as possible.

Livestock Compensation Program Signup Deadline Announced

Signup for the Livestock Compensation Program will end on **July 18, 2008**. To apply simply bring in your livestock documentation (this could be a calving/lambing book, tax records, loan documents, etc.) and any livestock leases. There is no minimum loss level required, only that you owned or leased commercial livestock on January 1st of 2005, 2006, or 2007 and your grazing was affected by a declared natural disaster. The process normally takes less than ½ hour. There are no late filed application provisions, so any application received after this date will be disapproved.

Reasonable Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairments, or hearing impairment. Please call this office if assistance is needed.

CRP Available for Haying or Grazing

Due to a national critical shortage of livestock feed the USDA has announced that haying and grazing will be allowed on certain CRP acreage beginning July 16, 2008. Haying or grazing will be allowed even if the acreage was hayed / grazed in previous years. CRP participants may request a voluntary modification to the CRP contract, using CRP-1M Addendum to allow critical feed use of the CRP acreage. Participants must obtain a modified conservation plan from NRCS to provide for haying or grazing in a manner that is consistent with the conservation goals of CRP. There are no restrictions on selling or leasing the forage.

Participants requesting to modify the CRP contract for critical feed use will be required to pay an administrative fee of \$75 before COC approval of CRP-1M Addendum. No CRP payment reduction will be assessed for any producer requesting to modify the CRP contract for critical feed use. Acreage eligible for critical feed use includes acreage devoted to practices:

- CP1, Establishment of Permanent Introduced Grasses and Legumes
- CP2, Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses
- CP4B, Permanent Wildlife Habitat – Corridors
- CP4D, Permanent Wildlife Habitat
- CP10, Vegetative Cover – Grass - Already Established
- CP18B, Establishment of Permanent Vegetation to Reduce Salinity
- CP18C, Establishment of Permanent Salt Tolerant Vegetative Cover.

CRP participants that modify the CRP contract to include haying or grazing as a critical feed use must:

- remove all hay or livestock from CRP acreage before November 10, 2008
- limit haying of CRP acreage to 1 cutting
- not hay and graze the same acreage
- leave at least 50 percent of each field unhayed
- leave at least 25 percent of each field ungrazed for wildlife or graze all of the CRP acreage at no more than 75 percent of the stocking rate, as determined by NRCS
- not conduct the haying or grazing activity during the primary nesting season
- re-establish, at the participant's expense, any cover destroyed or damaged as a result of critical feed use.

Please call to make an appointment if you are interested in participating in this program.

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.

Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Reminders

NAP participants must report their 2007 crop production by July 1, 2008 to establish an actual production history (APH). If production is not reported, 65% of the T-yield will be assigned.

A Notice of Loss, CCC-576, must be filed for crop losses within 15 days of the disaster event or the date the loss becomes apparent. Failure to report losses timely could result in a loss of eligibility for payment.

Prior to grazing acreage covered by NAP for hay, you must request an appraisal to determine production. Grazing this acreage without an appraisal will result in a reduction in payment.

Bank Account Changes

Almost all Farm Service Agency payments are made electronically using Direct Deposit. This innovation has cut down on the number of missing and late payments and reduced the time required to move funds. Another benefit is that a Direct Deposit to your account can be made within 48 hours.

To keep the system running smoothly, it's critical to keep the county office staff up to date on changes you might make in your financial institutions. If you have changed accounts or institutions that might affect the direct deposit of your FSA payments, contact the FSA county office so we can update our files to insure continued uninterrupted service.

Conservation Reserve Program Continuous Sign Up

Under the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) continuous sign-up, eligible agriculture producers may apply to enroll small acreages of eligible cropland or marginal pastureland in CRP. Participants agree to establish approved conservation practices on eligible land and remove the land from agricultural production in return for an annual rental payment for the term of the CRP contract, which can run from 10 to 15 years.

A 50% cost-share payment is available for completing approved conservation practices. There is an additional 40% cost-share incentive payment for certain practices. In addition to the cost-share and annual rental payments, there is also a sign-up incentive payment and an annual maintenance payment. Some eligible practices that can be completed on land enrolled under continuous CRP are: Field Windbreaks, Shallow Water Area for Wildlife, Shelterbelt Establishment, and Riparian Buffers. Call the FSA office or contact your local NRCS area office for more details.

Sign Up for 2008 Conservation Programs Now

Agricultural producers are encouraged to submit applications for fiscal year 2008 conservation programs funds to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offices. Applications on file through June 30, 2008, will be considered in the next round of funding for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) and the Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) Program.

“With the enactment of a new Farm Bill we are anticipating additional financial assistance dollars to be available yet this year,” said Xavier Montoya, NRCS State Conservationist. “In the event we receive additional financial assistance for our existing programs, applications submitted during this period will be considered immediately.”

Applications on file that were not selected for contracts earlier this year may be carried over. Applicants should contact the local office if they wish to maintain or change their application.

The programs are available on a continuous sign-up basis and offer financial and technical assistance for a variety of conservation practices to private land managers on a voluntary basis. Applications received after July 1, will be deferred and held for consideration at a future date as funding becomes available.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals. EQIP provides financial incentives to install or implement structural and management conservation practices on eligible agricultural land. Examples of how EQIP may be used to improve the health of the land include installing water quality improvements, such as livestock waste management systems; enhancing grazing lands management through fencing and water developments; and increasing water conservation by improving irrigation systems.

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) offers incentive payments for the creation of high quality wildlife habitats through projects that support state and local priorities.

The Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) offers landowners assistance to restore and protect wetlands and associated uplands through permanent easements, 30-year easements, and cost-share only restoration agreements. The program is designed to achieve maximum wetland functions and values while obtaining optimum wildlife habitat.

The Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) Program provides financial incentives to land managers to install conservation practices that will reduce risk to their agricultural operation. This program is offered statewide on a watershed basis and is targeted to control of Russian olive and tamarisk species this year. Applications are available at Lusk Service Center. For more information go to <http://www.wy.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/index.html> or contact the NRCS office.

Agriculture Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA)

Foreign persons or entities who acquire, transfer, or hold a 5 percent or greater interest in agriculture land or who gross \$1000 or more from any agriculture land must report this information to the Secretary of Agriculture. The information must be reported to the local FSA office within 90 days of a change in interest.

New Measurement Service Rates

FSA provides a number of measurement services for our producers that include: measuring crops before or after planting; measuring fields prior to harvest; verifying crops, conditions, and acreages for disaster purposes; measuring or sampling farm stored grains or other commodity crops; and verifying crops for late-filed acreage reports. The cost of these services has changed. The new rate is \$30 for the basic farm visit, plus \$16 for the first hour and \$8 for each additional 30 minutes. A minimum of 1 hour will be charged.

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Dates to Remember

June 30	Conservation Program Deadline (NRCS)
July 1	Crop Reporting Deadline
July 1	Final Day to report 2007 crop production for NAP
July 1	Final Day to sign for NAP Actual Production History
July 4	Independence Day Holiday – Office Closed
July 18	Final Day to apply for Livestock Compensation Program
August 1	Final Day to return or postmark COC Nomination Petition
August 1	Final Day to request Reconstitution
September 1	Labor Day Holiday – Office Closed
Continues	Continuous CRP Signup
Continues	Farm Storage Facility Loans

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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