



NEWSLETTER



WASHAKIE-HOT SPRINGS COUNTY FSA

208 SHILOH RD WORLAND, WY 82401

MARCH 2015

Phone: 307-347-2456

FAX: 1-855-415-3445

Next meeting:
April 9, 2015 at 2:00 p.m.

Staff:

Sherri Harvey, CED
Bill Morrison, FLM
Lisa Bower, PT
Teresa Shelton, PT

County Committee:

Everett Jones, Chairperson
Kirk Tolman, Vice-Chairperson
Julie Haun, Member
Arnold Pennoyer, Member
Dave Slover, Member

Farewell Washakie and Hot Springs Counties

Effective March 23, 2015, I will be one of two FSA District Directors for Wyoming. The past 4 years here in Washakie and Hot Springs Counties have been a true blessing to me and my family. The people here have taken us in as one of their own. We have made many life-long friends and memories.

Your FSA County Committee here is by far the best I have ever had the opportunity to work with, these folks strive to ensure that each of you are given every opportunity to participate and receive any and all benefits you may be eligible for. Let them know you appreciate them when you get the chance. It has been my pleasure to have had the opportunity to work for past members, Kate Propp, Dan Rice, Steve Snyder, Matt Brown and Bruce Thurgood and current members Julie Haun, Everett Jones, Arnold Pennoyer, Dave Slover and Kirk Tolman. The office staff, Bill Morrison, Lisa Bower and Teresa Shelton has been a great bunch to work with. You will continue to receive great service from these fine, knowledgeable individuals.

Although my husband James and I will be relocating to the other side of the state, we hope you will continue to keep in touch with us. We will miss each and every one of you. May God bless you and your families. Life is good! - Sherri D Harvey ☺

Annual Notifications

Bank Account Changes

Current policy mandates that FSA payments be electronically transferred into a bank account. In order for timely payments to be made, producers need to notify the FSA county office when an account has been changed or if another financial institution purchases the bank where payments are sent. Payments can be delayed if the FSA office is not aware of updates to bank accounts and routing numbers.

Farm Reconstitutions

When changes in farm ownership or operation take place, a farm *reconstitution* is necessary. The reconstitution — or recon — is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. Farm Recon methods are: *Estate Method* — the division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate; *Designation of Landowner Method* — may be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons. In order to use this method, the land sold must have been owned for at least three years, or a waiver granted, and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding; *Default Method* — the division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system.

Special Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact the county FSA office staff directly or by phone.

Breaking New Ground

Landowners and operators are reminded that in order to receive payments from USDA, compliance with Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions are required. Farmers with HEL determined soils are reminded of tillage, crop residue, and rotation requirements as specified per their conservation plan. Producers are to notify the USDA Farm Service Agency prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to insure compliance. Failure to obtain advance approval for any of these situations can result in the loss of eligibility and all Federal payments.

Controlled Substance

Any person 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.

Power of Attorney

For those who find it difficult to visit the county office because of work schedules, distance, health, etc..., FSA has a power of attorney form available that allows producers to designate another person to conduct business at the office

Appeal Process

After an FSA official makes a decision on a request for USDA services or application, the producer will be sent a letter informing him/her of the decision and options that can be pursued. Generally, program participants have four choices — an informal review with the original agency decision-maker, an opportunity for mediation, an appeal to the next level of authority within the agency and finally the national appeals division.

FSA Signature Policy

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. There are exceptions to the rule, where spouses may not sign on behalf of each other for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities. Individual signatures are also required on certain Farm Loan Program and Farm Storage Facility Loan documents.

Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA.

All individuals who are not U.S. citizens, and have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA with 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form (FSA-153) could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, Realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

Attention All Buyers of Agricultural Products

It is required that buyers of agricultural products check or register with the Secretary of State's Office to determine if there are liens against the seller of the product. If a lien is found, you are required to place the lien holder's name on the check as well as that of the seller. Ag products include but are not limited to: Livestock (including horses), crops used for feed (hay, silage, oats, etc.), machinery, equipment, and all other crops. **Failure to place the lien holder's name on the check may result in civil legal action being taken against the buyer of the product. Protect yourself as a buyer!** You may contact the Secretary of State's Office at (307) 777-7311.

NAP Insurance

The Non-insurable Assistance Program (NAP) is available for crops which crop insurance is not available. NAP is crop specific by county and may include grazing crops, mixed forage hay and small grain hay. Contact your local county office regarding specific crop coverage. NAP protects the producer against catastrophic losses. The deadline to purchase NAP for spring seeded crops such as small grains for hay is **April 1, 2015**. The fee for NAP is \$250 per crop per county, with a county maximum of \$750 and a multi county maximum of \$1,875.

Producers will have a buy up option for the 2015 NAP coverage on crops other than grazing. With the buy-up option producers will be able to choose between regular CAT level coverage or 50, 55, 60 or 65% coverage at 100% of the payment level. These buy-up coverage levels will have a premium calculation based on the level of coverage and acres planted to the covered commodity. Premiums will be billed at the end of the coverage period similar to multi-peril coverage.

To qualify for NAP benefits producers must 1) file an annual acreage report, 2) File a Notice of Loss within 15 days of an apparent loss, and 3) Report production to the county office.

Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides assistance to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law. LIP compensates livestock owners and contract growers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather, including losses due to hurricanes, floods, blizzards, wildfires, extreme heat or extreme cold.

For 2015, eligible losses must occur on or after Jan. 1, 2015, and before December 31, 2015. A notice of loss must be filed with FSA within 30 days of when the loss of livestock is apparent. Participants must provide the following supporting documentation to their local FSA office no later than 30 calendar days after the end of the calendar year for which benefits are requested:

- Proof of death documentation
- Copy of growers contracts

- Proof of normal mortality documentation

USDA has established normal mortality rates for each type and weight range of eligible livestock, i.e. Adult Beef Cow = 1.5% and Non-Adult Beef Cattle (less than 400 pounds) = 3%. These established percentages reflect losses that are considered expected or typical under “normal” conditions. Producers who suffer livestock losses in 2015 must file both of the following:

- A notice of loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss was apparent or by January 30, 2016.
- An application for payment by January 30, 2016.

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybee, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)

The Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) provides emergency assistance to eligible livestock, honeybee, and farm-raised fish producers who have losses due to disease, adverse weather or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires, not covered by other agricultural disaster assistance programs.

Eligible livestock losses include grazing losses not covered under the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), loss of purchased feed and/or mechanically harvested feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, additional cost of transporting water because of an eligible drought and additional cost associated with gathering livestock to treat for cattle tick fever.

Eligible honeybee losses include loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, cost of additional feed purchased above normal quantities due to an eligible adverse weather condition, colony losses in excess of normal mortality due to an eligible weather event or loss condition, including colony collapse disorder (CCD), and hive losses due to eligible adverse weather.

Producers who suffer eligible livestock, honeybee, or farm-raised fish losses from October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015 must file:

- A notice of loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent or by November 1, 2015
- An application for payment by November 1, 2015

USDA Enhances Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced the expansion of the Farm Storage and Facility Loan program, which provides low-interest financing to producers. The enhanced program includes 22 new categories of eligible equipment for fruit and vegetable producers.

Producers with small and mid-sized operations, and specialty crop fruit and vegetable growers, now have access to needed capital for a variety of supplies including sorting bins, wash stations and other food safety-related equipment. A new more flexible alternative is also provided for determining storage needs for fruit and vegetable producers, and waivers are available on a case-by-case basis for disaster assistance or insurance coverage if available products are not relevant or feasible for a particular producer.

Additionally, Farm Storage Facility Loan security requirements have been eased for loans up to \$100,000. Previously, all loans in excess of \$50,000 and any loan with little resale value required a promissory note/security agreement and additional security, such as a lien on real estate. Now loans up to \$50,000 can be secured by only a promissory note/security agreement and some loans between \$50,000 and \$100,000 will no longer require additional security.

The low-interest funds can be used to build or upgrade permanent facilities to store commodities. Eligible commodities include grains, oilseeds, peanuts, pulse crops, hay, honey, renewable biomass commodities, fruits and vegetables. Qualified facilities include grain bins, hay barns and cold storage facilities for fruits and vegetables.

Microloan Cap Grows to \$50,000

Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds farmers and ranchers that the FSA borrowing limit for microloans increased from \$35,000 to \$50,000, effective Nov. 7, 2014. Microloans offer borrowers simplified lending with less paperwork.

The microloan change allows beginning, small and mid-sized farmers to access an additional \$15,000 in loans using a simplified application process with up to seven years to repay. Microloans are part of USDA's continued commitment to [small and midsized farming operations](#).

To complement the microloan program additional changes to FSA eligibility requirements will enhance beginning farmers and ranchers access to land, a key barrier to entry level producers. FSA policies related to farm experience have changed so that other types of skills may be considered to meet the direct farming experience required for farm ownership loan eligibility. Operation or management of non-farm businesses, leadership positions while serving in the military or advanced education in an agricultural field will now count towards the experience applicants need to show when applying for farm ownership loans.

Important Note: Microloans cannot be used to purchase real estate.

Washakie-Hot Springs County FSA Office
 208 Shiloh RD
 Worland, WY 82401



PRESORTED STANDARD
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 Farm Service Agency
 PERMIT # G-96

Beginning Farmer Loans

FSA assists beginning farmers to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's average size farm.

Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:	
Yield Update and Base Acre Reallocation Deadline ARC/PLC Election Deadline	March 31, 2015
NAP Deadline for Spring and Summer Seeded Crops	April 1, 2015
Office Hours are from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. Producers are urged to call for an appointment, so the office staff can assist you in a timely manner.	Selected Interest Rates for March 2015: Farm Operating Loan – Direct - 2.50% Farm Ownership Loan – Direct - 3.50% Farm Storage Facility Loans for March: Grain Bins – 7 year term - 1.75%

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users)

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting/event/function should contact Washakie-Hot Springs County Office at 307-347-2456 extension 2 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339 by April 2, 2015.