USDA

United States Department of Agriculture

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Weston County FSA Office

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FSA Home Page
www.fsa.usda.gov

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New Employee

Please welcome Kathrin (Kati) LeQuia. Kati recently accepted the position as permanent Program Technician in our office. Kati grew up on a farm near Twin Falls, ID where her family raised alfalfa, silage corn, wheat and cattle. Kati attended BYU-Idaho receiving her Bachelor in Ecology, Range, Wildlife, and Fisheries, with an emphasis in Range Management. Kati is married to Nick, who is currently pursuing a degree in Business Management, emphasizing in Entrepreneurship. We are so excited to have Kati on board!

2015 ACREAGE REPORTING DEADLINE IS JULY 15th

The annual, timely and accurate reporting of acres for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of benefits for a variety of FSA programs. Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage must be reported to receive annual rental payments. ARC/PLC requires all cropland to be reported. Crop acreage for Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) must also be reported. Crop reports, form FSA-578, must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted.

In Wyoming, producers need to file their 2015 acreage reports for spring seeded crops and CRP by July 15, 2015.

Prevented Planting: needs to be reported no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date.

Failed Acreage: must be filed before disposition of the crop, and producers must be able to establish to the satisfaction of the county committee that the crop failed and was prevented from being replanted through the normal planting period because of natural disaster conditions.

ARC/PLC Acreage Maintenance

Producers enrolled in Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC), Price Loss Coverage (PLC) must protect all cropland and noncropland acres on the farm from wind and water erosion and noxious weeds. Producers who sign ARC county or individual contracts and PLC contracts agree to effectively control noxious weeds on the farm according to sound agricultural practices. If a producer fails to take necessary actions to correct a maintenance problem on a farm that is enrolled in ARC or PLC, the County Committee may elect to terminate the contract for the program year.

A list of noxious weeds can be found on the following website: http://plants.usda.gov/java/noxiousDriver.

ARC/PLC Enrollment Coming Soon

2014 and 2015 ARC and PLC enrollment will begin sometime in June (specific date will be announced at a later time). Election is not the same as enrollment and producers must still enroll their farm (sign a contract) to receive program benefits as applicable.

NEWSLETTERS CAN NOW BE RECEIVED VIA E-MAIL

If you would like to start receiving our newsletters electronically, please provide your e-mail address to the local office.

DATES TO REMEMBER

June 2015	ARC/PLC Contract Enrollments Begin for 2014 & 2015
July 15, 2015	Acreage Reporting Deadline
Continuous	Continuous Conservation Reserve Program and Farm Storage Facility Loans
Ongoing	Signup for LIP and ELAP

County Committee Election

The 2015 COC Election will be held in Local Administrative Area (LAA) 2 (the northwestern part of the county). Doug Materi is completing his third and final term as COC member from this area. Nominations for candidates may be submitted to the office between June 15th and August 3rd. Eligible voters in LAA 2 will receive postcards in early June. If you are an eligible voter in LAA 2 and you do not receive a postcard or you are not sure which LAA you reside in, please contact the office. **A big thank you to Doug for his 9 years of service.**

Filing a Notice of Loss

The CCC-576, Notice of Loss, is used to report failed acreage and prevented planting and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. Timely filing a Notice of Loss is required for all crops including grasses. For losses on crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and crop insurance, you must file a CCC-576, Notice of Loss, in the FSA County Office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent.

If filing for prevented planting, an acreage report and CCC-576, Notice of Loss, must be filed within 15 calendar days of the final planting date for the crop.

USDA Announces New Support for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

Department Implementing New Farm Bill Programs, Unveiling New Centralized Online Resource to Support Next Generation of Farmers
USDA has announced the implementation of new Farm Bill measures and other policy changes to improve the financial security of new and beginning farmers and ranchers. USDA also unveiled www.USDA.gov/newfarmers, a new website that will provide a centralized, one-stop resource where beginning farmers and ranchers can explore the variety of USDA initiatives designed to help them succeed.
USDA's www.usda.gov/newfarmers has in depth information for new farmers and ranchers, including: how to increase access to land and capital; build new market opportunities; participate in conservation opportunities; select and use the right risk management tools; and access USDA education, and technical support programs. These issues have been identified as top priorities by new farmers. The website will also feature instructive case studies about beginning farmers who have successfully utilized USDA resources to start or expand their business operations.
Today's policy announcements in support of beginning farmers and ranchers include:

- Waiving service fees for new and beginning farmers or ranchers to enroll in the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for the 2014 crop year. NAP provides risk management tools to farmers who grow crops for which there is no crop insurance product. Under this waiver, announced via an official notice to Farm Service Agency offices, farmers and ranchers whom already enrolled in NAP for the 2014 crop year and certified to being a beginning farmer or social disadvantaged farmer are eligible for a service fee refund.
- Eliminating payment reductions under the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) for new and beginning farmers which will allow routine, prescribed, and emergency grazing outside the primary nesting season on enrolled land consistent with approved conservation plans. Previously, farmers and ranchers grazing on CRP land were subject to a reduction in CRP payments of up to 25 percent. Waiving these reductions for new and beginning farmers will provide extra financial support during times of emergency like drought and other natural disasters.
- Increasing payment rates to beginning farmers and ranchers under Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP). Under this provision, beginning farmers can claim up 90 percent of losses for lost livestock, such as bees, under ELAP. This is a fifty percent increase over previously available payment amounts to new and beginning farmers.

In the near future, USDA will also announce additional crop insurance program changes for beginning farmers and ranchers – including discounted premiums, waiver of administrative fees, and other benefits.

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 = 2.0% and Non-Adult Beef Cattle (less than 400 pounds) = 4.3%. 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.

Additional Information about LIP is available at your local FSA office or online at: www.fsa.usda.gov.

Contact your local FSA office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov for more about FSA programs and loans.

FARM LOAN PROGRAM INFORMATION

USDA Enhances Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

The USDA expanded the FSFL 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, FSFL 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.

Microloans

FSA reminds farmers and ranchers that the FSA borrowing limit for microloans increased from $35,000 to $50,000, on 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. Since 2010, more than 50 percent of USDA's farm loans now go to beginning farmers and FSA has increased its lending to targeted underserved producers by nearly 50 percent.

Loans for Targeted Underserved Producers

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. Loans are available for operating type loans and/or purchase or improve farms or ranches. While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, the FSA has provided priority funding for members of targeted underserved groups. A targeted underserved applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities. For purposes of this program, targeted underserved groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

Changing How Your Agriculture Operation Conducts Business Can Adversely Affect Existing Farm Loan Program Customers

FSA needs the help of our customers, accountants, attorneys and our lending partners. When you (or your customers) participate in FSA programs, particularly the loan programs (FSA direct and guarantee loans) it is important to notify FSA as early in the process as possible when considering a change in business structure. Some changes of concern are type of operation (partnership, trust, LLC), new EIN, adding new members, etc. Some changes (especially for existing loan customers can affect eligibility, security instruments and other program areas. While changing the manner in which a customer does business may be legal, allowed by the IRS and perhaps more easily rectified in a bank, those changes may make a customer ineligible for FSA loans they currently hold, future loans, servicing of existing loans, or risk management and other program payments.

If you are a FSA customer or you are advising FSA loan customers and are considering changing the manner in which business is conducted, please contact the local FSA loan official prior to making the proposed changes. Time gives us an opportunity to work with the customer to try to keep them eligible for all services we can provide. For existing customers, proactive handling is our best ally.

Changing form of doing business takes deliberation and preparation. We want to be involved at the beginning of the process so we can provide FSA program guidance to retain customer eligibility and access to FSA programs.

FLP program access that can be affected with certain changes (if prior approval not obtained from FSA)

- Ineligibility for new loans or servicing.
- Can be perceived as conversion (security asset transfer or marketing security production under another name).
- Can be perceived as non-monetary default regarding program requirements or failure to keep loan agreements.
- If additional parties have been added may permanently affect eligibility.

The critical factor is to process the resolution as quickly as possible to avoid opportunity for non-monetary default or ineligibility.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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