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USDA United States Department of Agriculture

Farm Service Agency Electronic News Service BULLETIN

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Niobrara County FSA Updates

Niobrara County FSA Office

905 South Main Street
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Lusk, WY 82225

Phone: (307) 334-2953, Ext. 2
Fax: (855) 415-3433

Acting County Executive Director: Kimberly Nusbaum

Acting Farm Loan Manager: Dixie Mount (307) 233-4050

County Committee:
Jason ZumBrunnen
Joe Kruse
Kurt Gaukel

Carol Geisinger, COC Advisor

CED Message

Please be aware that upgrades have been made to our phone system, and there is now only ONE phone number that can be used to reach the Niobrara County FSA Office, 307-334-2953. Please make sure to edit where you have this number stored – in your cell phone contacts, in your address/phone book at home and anywhere else you keep phone numbers stored. Thank you, and I apologize for any inconvenience.

Please note the following important dates and deadlines:

December 21st – 25th – Christmas – Office Closed

January 1st – New Years Day – Office Closed

January 15th – Market Facilitation Program Application Deadline

January 21st – President's Day – Office Closed

Next County Committee Meeting:
February 21st, 2019

2018 County Committee Special Election

Due to an error in the mailing of ballots for the regular County Committee Election for 2018, a Special Election will be held for the County Committee Election for Local Administrative Area (LAA) #2, the northern portion of Niobrara County, including Township 35 North, and those north of there.

The following is the calendar for the Special Election being conducted: **December 5, 2018** – The nomination period begins. Request nomination forms from the Niobrara County FSA Office or obtain online at http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections

January 16, 2019 – Last day to file nomination forms at the Niobrara County FSA Office

January 18, 2019 – Ballots mailed to eligible voters

February 19, 2019 – Last day to return voted ballots to the Niobrara County FSA Office

Please contact the Niobrara County FSA Office if you have any questions about the County Committee Election process at 307-334-2953, Ext. 2.

USDA Market Facilitation Program

USDA launched the trade mitigation package aimed at assisting farmers suffering from damage due to unjustified trade retaliation by foreign nations. Producers of certain commodities can now sign up for the Market Facilitation Program (MFP).

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will administer MFP to provide payments to corn (fresh and processed), cotton, dairy, hog, sorghum, soybean (fresh and processed), wheat, shelled almond, and fresh sweet cherry producers. An announcement about further payments will be made in the coming months, if warranted.

The sign-up period for MFP runs through Jan. 15, 2019, with information and instructions provided at www.farmers.gov/mfp. MFP provides payments to producers of eligible commodities who have been significantly impacted by actions of foreign governments resulting in the loss of traditional exports. Eligible producers should apply after harvest is complete, as payments will only be issued once production is reported.

A payment will be issued on 50 percent of the producer's total production, multiplied by the MFP rate for a specific commodity. A second payment period, if warranted, will be determined by the USDA.

For a list of initial MFP payments rates, view the MFP Fact Sheet.

MFP payments are capped per person or legal entity as follows:

- A combined $125,000 for eligible crop commodities
- A combined $125,000 for dairy production and hogs

- A combined $125,000 for fresh sweet cherries and almonds

Applicants must also have an average adjusted gross income for tax years 2014, 2015, and 2016 of less than $900,000. Applicants must also comply with the provisions of the Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation regulations.

Expanded Hog Timeline

USDA has expanded the timeline for producers with whom the Aug. 1, 2018, date does not accurately represent the number of head of live hogs they own. Producers may now choose any date between July 15 to Aug. 15, 2018, that correctly reflects their actual operation.

USDA Offers Targeted Farm Loan Funding for Underserved Groups and Beginning Farmers

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers that FSA offers targeted farm ownership and farm operating loans to assist underserved applicants as well as beginning farmers and ranchers.

USDA defines underserved applicants as 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 farm loan program purposes, targeted underserved groups are women, African Americans, American Indians and Alaskan Natives, Hispanics and Asians and Pacific Islanders.

Underserved or beginning farmers and ranchers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank can apply for either FSA direct loans or guaranteed loans. Direct loans are made to applicants by FSA. Guaranteed loans are made by lending institutions who arrange for FSA to guarantee the loan. FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. The FSA guarantee allows lenders to make agricultural credit available to producers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria.

The direct and guaranteed loan program provides for two types of loans: farm ownership loans and farm operating loans. In addition to customary farm operating and ownership loans, FSA now offers Microloans through the direct loan program. The focus of Microloans is on the financing needs of small, beginning farmer, niche and non-traditional farm operations. Microloans are available for both ownership and operating finance needs. To learn more about microloans, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans.

To qualify as a beginning producer, the individual or entity must meet the eligibility requirements outlined for direct or guaranteed loans. Additionally, individuals and all entity members must have operated a farm for less than 10 years. Applicants must materially or substantially participate in the operation.

For more information on FSA's farm loan programs and targeted underserved and beginning farmer guidelines, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans.

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting should contact Kimberly Nusbaum at 307-334-2953 extension 2 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

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