

December 2019



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

BULLETIN

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Crook County FSA Updates

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Alan Ista
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County Office Notes

Hi, Everyone!

It was very good to see everyone the past couple weeks as we wrapped up our fall deadline season. We also completed our 2019 COC Election season yesterday. Alan Ista was reelected for a new 3 year term.

If you have not been in this fall, please know that 2019 ARC/PLC election and enrollment is continuing until March 15th, so please come and see us to complete that.

Soon we will be starting a new year, and with that, the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) begins again. Remember to report livestock losses to us within 30 days of the loss being apparent. We cannot help with losses that we do not know about.

Reminder:

Our first **Workshop Wednesday of 2020** will be on **Wednesday, January 8th at 4:00 PM**, at the Sundance State Bank Meeting Room (attached to the Post Office). 207 N 2nd Street, Sundance, WY 82729

Next County Committee Meeting:

We will be going over requirements for 2020 applicable to all producers, and also be presenting information specific to Beginning Farmers and Ranchers.

January 22, 2020 @ 11:00 AM

USDA has announced a sign-up period for general Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) enrollment. The sign-up runs through February 28, 2020. For more information, please see the article below.

Lastly, on behalf of the Crook County Natural Resource District - they have a board position available. You must be a registered voter and live outside of an incorporated city in Crook County to meet the Rural Position qualifications. If interested, please fill out the application located on the Crook County website or visit the office for a copy, and attend the next board meeting for the Crook County Natural Resource District at 12:00pm on January 7, 2020 at the USDA Service Center.

www.crookcounty.wy.gov/special_districts/index.php

Dates to Remember:

December 25 - Office closed in observance of Christmas

January 1 - Office closed in observance of New Year's Day

January 8 - Workshop Wednesday, 4:00 PM, Sundance State Bank Meeting Room, 2020 program requirements and new producer information.

February 28 - CRP sign-up deadline

March 15 - ARC/PLC election and contract enrollment deadline for 2019

Crook County Farm Service Agency Announces County Committee Election Results

Crook County U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced that County Committee elections for 2019 are over and the ballots have been counted.

Alan Ista of Hulett was elected to represent local administrative area (LAA) #1.

County committee members are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA. They help deliver programs at the county level and work to serve the needs of local producers. All recently elected county committee members will take office in January 2020 and will be joining the existing committee. Every FSA office is required to have a county committee, and they are made up of local farmers, ranchers and foresters who are elected by local producers.

Nearly 7,800 FSA county committee members serve FSA offices nationwide. Each committee has three to 11 elected members who serve three-year terms of office. One-third of county committee seats are up for election each year. County committee members impact the administration of FSA within a community by applying their knowledge and judgment to help FSA make important decisions on its commodity support programs, conservation programs, indemnity and disaster programs, emergency programs and eligibility.

County committee members impact producers through their decision making and help shape the culture of a local FSA office. They also ensure the fair and equitable administration of FSA farm programs in their counties and are accountable to the Secretary of Agriculture. Members conduct hearings and reviews as requested by the state committee, ensure underserved farmers, ranchers and foresters are fairly represented, make recommendations to the state committee on existing programs, monitor changes in farm programs and inform farmers of the purpose and provisions of FSA programs. They also assist with outreach and inform underserved producers such as beginning farmers, ranchers and foresters, about FSA opportunities.

For more information, visit the FSA website at fsa.usda.gov/elections or contact the Crook County FSA office at 307-283-2870.

USDA Announces Opening Signup for Conservation Reserve Program on December 9, 2019

USDA is opening signup for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) on December 9, 2019. The deadline for agricultural producers to sign up for general CRP is February 28, 2020, while signup for continuous CRP is ongoing.

Farmers and ranchers who enroll in CRP receive a yearly rental payment for voluntarily establishing long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as "covers") to control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat on marginally productive agricultural lands.

CRP has 22 million acres enrolled, but the 2018 Farm Bill lifted the cap to 27 million acres. This means farmers and ranchers have a chance to enroll in CRP for the first time or continue their participation for another term.

By enrolling in CRP, producers are improving water quality, reducing soil erosion, and restoring habitat for wildlife. This in turn spurs hunting, fishing, recreation, tourism, and other economic development across rural America.

CRP Enrollment Options

General Signup

CRP general signup will be held annually. The competitive general signup will now include increased opportunities for enrollment of wildlife habitat through the State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) initiative.

Continuous Signup

While some practices under SAFE will remain available through continuous signup, CRP continuous signup will focus primarily on water quality with the Clean Lakes, Estuaries, and Rivers (CLEAR) Initiative. The 2018 Farm Bill prioritizes water quality practices such as contour grass strips, filter strips, riparian buffers, wetlands and a new prairie strip.

USDA will also be working with Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) partners to relaunch CREP continuous options in each state under new statutory provisions. CREP will continue to target high-priority local, state or regional conservation concerns.

Grasslands Signups

CRP Grasslands signup helps landowners and operators protect grassland, including rangeland, and pastureland and certain other lands while maintaining the areas as grazing lands. A separate CRP Grasslands signup will be offered each year following general signup.

Pilot Programs

Later in 2020, (FSA will roll out pilot programs within CRP: CLEAR 30, which allows contracts expiring with CLEAR practices to be reenrolled in 30-year contracts and in the Soil Health and Income Protection Program (SHIPP) in the prairie pothole region. More information on these programs will be announced in the new year.

Land Transition

The CRP Transition Incentives Program (TIP) is an option for producers interested in transitioning land to a beginning farmer or rancher or a member of a socially disadvantaged group to return land to production for sustainable grazing or crop production. CRP contract holders no longer need to be a retired or retiring owner or operator to transition their land. TIP participants may have a lease less than five years with an option to purchase, and they have two years before the end of the CRP contract to make conservation and land improvements.

Previously Expired Land

Land enrolled in CRP under a 15-year contract that expired in September 2017, 2018 or 2019, may be eligible for enrollment if there was no opportunity for re-enrollment and the practice under the expired contract has been maintained.

CRP Rates and Payments

FSA recently posted updated soil rental rates for CRP. County average rates are posted on the [CRP Statistics webpage](#). Soil rental rates are statutorily prorated at 90 percent for continuous signup and 85 percent for general signup. The rental rates will be assessed annually. Under continuous signup, producers also receive incentives, including a signup incentive payment and a practice incentive payment.

To enroll in CRP, contact your local FSA county office or visit fsa.usda.gov/crp. To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-locator.

Reminder to FSA Direct and Guaranteed Borrowers with Real Estate Security

Farm Service Agency would like to remind farm loan borrowers who have pledged real estate as security for their loans, of key items for maintaining loan collateral. It is required that borrowers must obtain prior consent, or approval, by either FSA, for direct loans, or by a guaranteed lender, for any transaction affecting real estate security. Examples of these transactions include, but are not limited to:

- Leases of any kind;
- Easements of any kind;
- Subordinations;
- Partial releases, and
- Sales

Failure to meet or follow the requirements set forth in the loan agreement, promissory note, and other security instruments could lead to nonmonetary default which could jeopardize your current and future loans.

It is critical that borrowers keep an open line of communication with their FSA loan staff or guaranteed lender when it comes to changes in their operation. For more information on borrower responsibilities, read [Your FSA Farm Loan Compass](#).

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting should contact [Sarah Hanlon](#) at [307-283-2870](#), extension 2 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. 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).