

October 2019



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

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Niobrara County FSA Updates

Niobrara County FSA Office

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Jason ZumBrunnen

Niobrara County Notes

Greetings Niobrara County Farmers and Ranchers!

We are currently in a busy time of the year. It is finally time to sign up for our 2019 and 2020 ARC/PLC program that is applicable to those individuals who have base acres on their farm. Due to the new 2018 Farm Bill, we are doing this a little behind schedule. We will be signing up 2019 and 2020 at the same time. This year you will need to make an election to what part of the program you want to participate in. Please see the article below for more details.

It is also time to sign your 2020 crop reports for all fall-seeded crops as well as forages and CRP. The deadline for crop reports is November 15th, so please make sure you get into the office before then. We like to avoid late file fees if at all possible. With such a small window between now and November 15th, please call ahead and make an appointment so that we can be ready for you.

There are still a handful of producers who need to still sign up for the Market Facilitation Program (MFP). This program provides funds to compensate producers for the current downward trend in prices due to the tariff situation.

Please also remember with our current cold snap we are going through, if you lose livestock due to these adverse weather conditions, please call the

Joe Kruse
Kurt Gaukel

Carol Geisinger, COC Advisor

Next County Committee Meeting: December 5, 2019

office to put a notice of loss on file. All it takes is a phone call to start this process. You can decide at a later date if you want to fully apply for our Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) that helps compensate for livestock losses due to adverse weather. If you wait more than 30 days to put this notice of loss on file you will more than likely lose the ability to claim these potentially payable losses. We have had many producers this year lose out on these benefits as they did not file within the 30 day window.

As you can tell it is a busy time in the office so please call for an appointment if at all possible. Keep warm and stay safe!

Please note the following important dates and deadlines:

November 11, 2019 – OFFICE CLOSED – Veteran’s Day

November 15, 2019 – Fall seeded crop reporting deadline

November 28, 2019 – OFFICE CLOSED – Thanksgiving Day

December 2, 2019 – Deadline to purchase 2020 NAP Coverage

December 6, 2019 – Deadline to apply for Market Facilitation Program benefits

Within 15 days of noticing crop loss – File NAP Notice of Loss

Within 30 days of noticing livestock loss – File LIP Notice of Loss

FSA Encourages Farmers and Ranchers to Vote in County Committee Elections

The 2019 Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections began on Nov. 4, when ballots were mailed to eligible voters. The deadline to return the ballots to local FSA offices, or to be postmarked, is Dec. 2, 2019.

County committee members are an important component of the operations of FSA and provide a link between the agricultural community and USDA. Farmers and ranchers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity price support programs; conservation programs; incentive indemnity and disaster programs for some commodities; emergency programs and eligibility. FSA committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm, may also be eligible to vote.

Eligible voters in local administrative area #3, who do not receive a ballot can obtain one from their local USDA Service Center.

Newly elected committee members will take office Jan. 1, 2020.

The candidates in this year's election are:

Jason ZumBrunnen is nominated in LAA #3, Niobrara County, to serve as a committee member for a 3-year term. Jason resides near Kirtley and has been raising registered Angus cattle and hay for 7 years, but has been active in his family's operation most of his life.

Jason is an active member of Prairie Hills Church, Niobrara County Search and Rescue, and Wyoming Stock Growers.

More information on county committees, such as the new 2019 fact sheet, can be found on the FSA website at fsa.usda.gov/elections or at a local USDA Service Center.

USDA Opens 2019 Enrollment for Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Programs

Agricultural producers can now enroll in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, two popular safety net programs, for the 2019 crop year. Interested producers must sign up for either program by March 15, 2020.

The 2018 Farm Bill reauthorized and made updates to these two USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs. ARC provides income support payments on historical base acres when actual crop revenue declines below a specified guarantee level. PLC program provides income support payments on historical base acres when the price for a covered commodity falls below its effective reference price.

Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium grain rice (which includes short grain rice), safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

Updated provisions in the 2018 Farm Bill allow producers with an interest in a farm to enroll and elect coverage in crop-by-crop ARC-County or PLC, or ARC-Individual for the entire farm, for program year 2019. The election applies to both the 2019 and 2020 crop years. If a 2019 election is not submitted by the deadline of March 15, 2020, the election defaults to the current elections of the crops on the farm established under the 2014 Farm Bill. No payments will be earned in 2019 if the election defaults.

For crop years 2021 through 2023, producers will have an opportunity to make new elections. Farm owners cannot enroll in either program unless they have a share interest in the farm.

Once the 2019 election and enrollment are completed, producers on the farm for 2020 can complete an enrollment contract for the 2020 crop year beginning Oct. 7, 2019 and ending June 30, 2020.

Although 2019 enrollment begins Sept. 3, 2019 and must occur first, a producer waiting until Oct. 7, 2019 to enroll is afforded the opportunity to enroll in either program for both 2019 and 2020 during the same office visit. During this time, farm owners have a one-time opportunity to update PLC payment yields that takes effect beginning with crop year 2020. If the owner accompanies the producer to the office, the yield update may be completed during the same office visit.

In partnership with USDA, the University of Illinois and Texas A&M University are offering web-based decision tools to assist producers in making informed, educated decisions using crop data specific to their respective farming operations. These decision tools can be found at fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

Producers are reminded that enrolling in ARC or PLC programs can impact eligibility for some forms of crop insurance. Producers who elect and enroll in PLC also have the option of purchasing Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) through the USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA). Producers of covered commodities who elect ARC are ineligible for SCO on their planted acres.

For more information on ARC and PLC, download our program fact sheet or our 2014-2018 farm bills comparison fact sheet, or visit fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

Communication is Key in Lending

Farm Service Agency (FSA) is committed to providing our farm loan borrowers the tools necessary to be a success. A part of ensuring this success is providing guidance and counsel from the loan application process through the borrower's graduation to commercial lending institutions. While it is FSA's commitment to advise borrowers as they identify goals and evaluate progress, it is crucial for borrowers to communicate with their farm loan staff when changes occur. It is the borrower's responsibility to alert FSA to any of the following:

- Any proposed or significant changes in the farming operation;
- Any significant changes to family income or expenses;
- The development of problem situations;
- Any losses or proposed significant changes in security

In addition, if a farm loan borrower cannot make payments to suppliers, other creditors, or FSA on time, contact your farm loan staff immediately to discuss loan servicing option. For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

***Please remember if you will be coming into the office for the release of checks, etc to CALL ahead of time to ensure an FLP staff member is there and will be able to help you.**

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting should contact [Laura Kessler](mailto:Laura.Kessler@fsa.usda.gov) at [307-334-2953](tel:307-334-2953), 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).