Hello Producers~

Our county committee election is coming up soon. The Local Administrative Area (LAA) #3 is up for this year’s election. This is the eastern part of Sheridan and Johnson counties (please see description below/map in county FSA office). Thad Stoltz is our nominee for the election. He has served two terms (3 years each). Thank you, Thad for your dedication and service to the producers.

The 2019 Market Facilitation Program (MFP) signup that began July 25th will end Friday, December 6th. Please see additional information provided below on the eligible crops.

Thank you, farmers and ranchers, for your hard work! Staci, Justine and I wish you and your family a Happy Thanksgiving.

Best Regards,
Linda Benzel, CED

Elections for the 2019 County Committee

Voting is now open for the USDA’s Farm Service Agency’s (FSA) Sheridan~Johnson County Committee.

It is important that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the USDA. The 2019 election in Sheridan~Johnson County will be conducted for the representative for Local Administrative Area (LAA); LAA 3 correlates with school district 3 in Sheridan County and in Johnson County lies north of Township 44N, on the East side of I-90 and I-25 to the Campbell County line.

County committee members are a critical component of FSA operations. Committees should be comprised of members who reflect the diversity of producers involved in production agriculture. This means that producers representing underserved groups or communities should be on the committee to speak on behalf of their constituency.

County committee election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters on Nov. 4, 2019. The last day to return completed ballots to the Sheridan County USDA service center is Dec. 2, 2019.

For more information on eligibility to serve on FSA county committees, visit: fsa.usda.gov/elections.
USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced that higher levels of coverage will be offered through the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), a popular safety net program, beginning April 8, 2019. The 2018 Farm Bill also increased service fees and made other changes to the program, including service fee waivers for qualified military veterans interested in obtaining NAP coverage.

NAP provides financial assistance to producers of commercial crops for which insurance coverage is not available in order to protect against natural disasters that result in lower yields or crop losses or prevent crop planting.

**NAP Buy-Up Coverage Option**
The 2018 Farm Bill reinstates higher levels of coverage, from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Producers of organics and crops marketed directly to consumers also may exercise the “buy-up” option to obtain NAP coverage of 100 percent of the average market price at the coverage levels of between 50 and 65 percent of expected production. NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production.

Buy-up coverage is not available for crops intended for grazing.

**NAP Service Fees**
For all coverage levels, the new NAP service fee is the lesser of $325 per crop or $825 per producer per county, not to exceed a total of $1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties. These amounts reflect a $75 service fee increase for crop, county or multi-county coverage. The fee increases apply to obtaining NAP coverage on crops on or after April 8, 2019.

*Deadline to apply for 2020 coverage is December 2, 2019.*

**NAP Enhancements for Qualified Military Veterans**
The 2018 Farm Bill NAP amendments specify that qualified veteran farmers or ranchers are now eligible for a service fee waiver and premium reduction, if the NAP applicant meets certain eligibility criteria.

Beginning, limited resource and targeted underserved farmers or ranchers remain eligible for a waiver of NAP service fees and premium reduction when they file form CCC-860, “Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource and Beginning Farmer or Rancher Certification.”

For NAP application, eligibility and related program information, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/nap](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nap) or contact your local USDA Service Center. To locate your local FSA office, visit [www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov).
Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires Federal agencies to consider all potential environmental impacts for federally-funded projects before the project is approved.

For all Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs, an environmental review must be completed before actions are approved, such as site preparation or ground disturbance. These programs include, but are not limited to, the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program and farm loans. If project implementation begins before FSA has completed an environmental review, this will result in a denial of the request. There are exceptions regarding the Stafford Act and emergencies. It is important to wait until you receive written approval of your project proposal before starting any actions, including, but not limited to, vegetation clearing, site preparation or ground disturbance.

Remember to contact your local FSA office early in your planning process to determine what level of environmental review is required for your program application so that it can be completed timely.

Applications cannot be approved contingent upon the completion of an environmental review. FSA must have copies of all permits and plans before an application can be approved.
Important FSA Dates and Deadlines

- **November 11, 2019** – Veterans Day – Office Closed
- **November 15, 2019** – Fall Crop Acreage Reporting Deadline
- **November 28, 2019** – Thanksgiving – Office Closed
- **December 2, 2019** – NAP 2020 Signup Deadline
- **December 2, 2019** – LAA 3 Ballots postmarked Deadline
- **December 6, 2019** – MFP Signup Deadline

The Sheridan FSA Office is open Monday through Friday from 8am to 4:30pm, closed from noon to 1pm