



NEWSLETTER



Weston County Newsletter

June 2019

Weston County FSA Office

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Office Hours

8:00 am – 4:30 pm

Monday – Friday

County Executive Director

Peggy Livingston

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Farm Loan Manager

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County Committee

Tim Tysdal, Chariman

Chuck Grieves, Vice Chariman

Randy Oleson, Member

Robin Riesland, Minority

Advisor

Next County Committee

Meeting:

June 26, 2019 at 10:00 am

COMMENTS FROM THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Flooding has caused damage in Weston County this past spring. Ranches suffering severe damage may be eligible for assistance under the Emergency Conservation Program. Eligibility of affected producers and land is determined by the following:

- damage is so costly to rehab that federal assistance is or will be needed to return the land to productive agricultural use
- is unusual and is not the type that would recur frequently in the same area
- will affect the productive capacity of the rangeland
- will impair or endanger the land

A producer qualifying for ECP assistance may receive cost-share levels not to exceed 75% of the eligible cost of restoration measures. Maximum cost share per producer is \$200,000 per natural disaster occurrence. The following practices may be eligible:

- Removing debris from farmland
- Grading, shaping, or releveling severely damaged farmland
- Restoring conservation structures and other similar installations; including dams, ponds, reservoirs, diversions, or spreader ditches.

I encourage any producers who have been impacted by flooding to contact the county office as soon as possible. If you have already contacted the county office of your loss, please call to make an appointment to come to the office and complete Form FSA-848 *Cost-Share Request*. Sign up will be implemented starting **June 24th and end on July 23rd**. You will be required to locate where the impacted area(s) is/are on an aerial map. Providing the County Office with photos of the damage, is helpful. NRCS Paul Eitel, DC and/or myself will need to complete an onsite inspection to determine the type and extent of damage and to conduct an environmental and cultural resource evaluation. Practices will need to be completed within 6 months. Extensions may be granted under unusual circumstances. Each practice must be maintained and used throughout its normal lifespan for the purposes for which cost share was approved. Failure to take action that result in the failure of a practice to meet its conservation purpose is a violation and will result in cost share payments being recovered. Failure to maintain a practice is not a violation if it is determined failure was because of conditions beyond the producer's control.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns about any information shared in this newsletter, please do not hesitate to call the county office.

Best Regards,

Peggy Livingston, CED

NOMINATIONS FOR THE WESTON COUNTY FSA COUNTY COMMITTEE ARE BEING ACCEPTED

The county committee nomination period began on **June 14, 2019**. Nomination forms must be postmarked or received in the Weston County FSA office by close of business on **August 1, 2019**. For election purposes, counties are divided into local administrative areas (LAA). Each LAA nominates and elects one or more producer(s) to serve a three-year term on the FSA county committee. Each year, an election is held in an LAA where a committee member's three-year term is expiring. For 2019, an election will be held in LAA 1, which includes surrounding areas of the towns of Newcastle, Four Corners and Osage. To be eligible to serve on an FSA county committee, a person must participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA, be eligible to vote in a county committee election and reside in the LAA in which the person is a candidate. Farmers and ranchers may nominate themselves or others. Organizations representing minorities and women also may nominate candidates. To become a candidate, an eligible individual must sign an FSA-669A nomination form.

USDA REOPENS CONTINUOUS CRP SIGNUP

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will accept applications beginning June 3, 2019, for certain practices under the continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) signup and will offer extensions for expiring CRP contracts. This year's signup will include such practices as grassed waterways, filter strips, riparian buffers, wetland restoration and others. Continuous signup enrollment contracts are 10 to 15 years in duration. Soil rental rates will be set at 90 percent of the existing rates. Incentive payments will not be offered for these contracts. If you are interested in finding out more about this program, please contact the County Office, either in person or by telephone.

ARC/PLC ACREAGE MAINTENANCE

Producers enrolled in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs 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.



Photo credit: "Weeds" by matsuyuki

Report Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Losses

The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters including freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind, flood, excessive heat and qualifying drought (including native grass for grazing), among others.

Eligible producers must have purchased NAP coverage for 2019 crops. A notice of loss must be filed the earlier of 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster, when losses become apparent or 15 days from the final harvest date.

Eligible crops are crops for which crop insurance is not available, including small grain hay, perennial grass hay and rangeland or cropland used exclusively for grazing.

For more information on NAP, contact your local FSA office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap.

UPDATE YOUR RECORDS

FSA is cleaning up our producer record database. If you have any unreported changes of address, zip code, phone number, email address or an incorrect name or business name on file they need to be reported to our office. Changes in your farm operation, like the addition of a farm by lease or purchase, need to be reported to our office as well. Producers participating in FSA and NRCS programs are required to timely report changes in their farming operation to the County Committee in writing and update their CCC-902 Farm Operating Plan.

If you have any updates or corrections, please call your local FSA office to update your records.

BREAKING NEW GROUND

Agricultural producers are reminded to consult with FSA and NRCS before breaking out new ground for production purposes as doing so without prior authorization may put a producer's federal farm program benefits in jeopardy. This is especially true for land that must meet Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions.

Producers with HEL determined soils are required to apply tillage, crop residue and rotational requirements as specified in their conservation plan.

Producers should notify FSA as a first point of contact prior to conducting land clearing or drainage type projects to ensure the proposed actions meet compliance criteria such as clearing any trees to create new cropland, then these areas will need to be reviewed to ensure such work will not risk your eligibility for benefits.

Landowners and operators complete the form AD-1026 - *Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELIC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification* to identify the

proposed action and allow FSA to determine whether a referral to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for further review is necessary.



Photo credit: "Rolling on Elsham Hill" by David Wright

HIGHER LIMITS NOW AVAILABLE ON USDA FARM LOANS

Higher limits are now available for borrowers interested in USDA's farm loans, which help agricultural producers purchase farms or cover operating expenses. The 2018 Farm Bill increased the amount that producers can borrow through direct and guaranteed loans available through USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) and made changes to other loans, such as microloans and emergency loans. Key changes include:

- The Direct Operating Loan limit increased from \$300,000 to \$400,000, and the Guaranteed Operating Loan limit increased from \$ 1.429 million to \$1.75 million. Operating loans help producers pay for normal operating expenses, including machinery and equipment, seed, livestock feed, and more.
- The Direct Farm Ownership Loan limit increased from \$300,000 to \$600,000, and the Guaranteed Farm Ownership Loan limit increased from \$1.429 million to \$1.75 million. Farm ownership loans help producers become owner-operators of family farms as well as improve and expand current operations.
- Producers can now receive both a \$50,000 Farm Ownership Microloan and a \$50,000 Operating Microloan. Previously, microloans were limited to a combined \$50,000. Microloans provide flexible access to credit for small, beginning, niche, and non-traditional farm operations.



EVERY SEASON IS #SCAMSEASON

Remember to discuss your USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) account information only with people you recognize and trust.

If you have questions about your FSA accounts, contact the Weston County FSA office at 307-746-2701.

- Producers who previously received debt forgiveness as part of an approved FSA restructuring plan are now eligible to apply for emergency loans. Previously, these producers were ineligible.
- Beginning and socially disadvantaged producers can now receive up to a 95 percent guarantee against the loss of principal and interest on a loan, up from 90 percent.

About Farm Loans

Direct farm loans, which include microloans and emergency loans, are financed and serviced by FSA, while guaranteed farm loans are financed and serviced by commercial lenders. For guaranteed loans, FSA provides a guarantee against possible financial loss of principal and interest. For more information on FSA farm loans, visit www.fsa.usda.gov or contact your [local USDA service center](#). To apply for a loan, please contact Farm Loan Manager Rob Weppner at 307-682-8843.

DATES TO REMEMBER

June 3, 2019	Enrollment for continuous Conservation Reserve Program begins
June 24 – July 23, 2019	Emergency Conservation Program sign-up period – please call for an appointment
July 15, 2019	Acreage Reporting deadline for 2019 Spring Planted Crops and Summer Fallow – please call for an appointment
August 1, 2019	Nomination deadline for Local Administrative Area #1 (LAA#1) representative to serve on the County Committee.
November 11, 2019	Ballots for LAA#1 election will be sent to eligible voters.
November 15, 2019	Acreage Reporting deadline for 2019 Fall Planted Crops – please call for an appointment
December 2, 2019	LAA#1 Ballots must be returned to the county office.

NAP Notice of Loss for 2019 Crops must be filed the earlier of 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent, or 15 days of the final harvest date.



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