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Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# NEWSLETTER

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## Wyoming FSA Newsletter

### Wyoming Farm Service Agency

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[www.fsa.usda.gov/wy](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wy)

**State Executive Director:**  
Lois Van MARK

**State Committee:**  
Nancy Tarver - Chair  
David Slover - Member  
Lee Craig - Member

### Message from the State Executive Director

Harvest season is in full swing and so are Wyoming FSA county offices. The lingering pandemic and drought conditions continue to plague the agriculture industry throughout the west. I am proud to say that FSA administers numerous programs specifically designed to help our industry during these perilous times. Please keep in contact with your county FSA office to continue receiving program updates and assistance.

Drought is severe and USDA has declared every Wyoming county as either primary or contiguous natural disaster areas. If you need to haul livestock water please contact your county office to ask about the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program](#) (ELAP) which can help with cost share assistance. Also, if you have a NAP policy make sure you have completed a notice of loss if you are experiencing drought conditions. The [Livestock Forage Disaster Program](#) (LFP) can help if you have suffered a loss of grazed forage for covered livestock. It

Ronald Givens - Member  
Pete Arambel - Member

To find contact information for your local office go to [www.fsa.usda.gov/wy](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wy)

is important that you immediately contact your county office to obtain timely and expedient assistance in applying for these programs.

As you are probably aware, the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) is now under way to help eligible producers who continue to suffer market disruptions and associated costs due to coronavirus. To date, Wyoming FSA has approved nearly \$19 million in CFAP 2 payments. Please remember the deadline to apply is December 11, 2020. I would also add that a new tool [CFAP 2 Eligible Commodities Finder](#) is now available to make finding payment rates specific to your operation fast, simple, and easy. This is a good tool to quickly determine your payments amounts. For more information please see the below CFAP 2 article.

Lastly, I would like to introduce you to “Box and OneSpan” which is a new online tool that provides a secure, cloud-based site where confidential FSA documents can be managed, shared and signed without visiting your county office. In just a few clicks, producers can efficiently conduct business without needing to interrupt the productivity of their workday....and at the same time practice social distancing. Please contact your county office to get started!

If you need assistance, please call ahead for an appointment to ensure we provide the safest and most professional service possible. Thanks for all that you do!

-Lois Van MARK-

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## Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2

Signup for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) began on Sept. 21, 2020 and will continue through Dec. 11, 2020. CFAP 2 provides eligible producers with direct financial assistance due to market disruptions and associated costs because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Check out our [brief video](#) about the program.

CFAP 2 is a separate program from the first round of the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program, now referred to as CFAP 1. Farmers and ranchers who participated in CFAP 1 will not be automatically enrolled and must complete a new application for CFAP 2. Details on how to apply can be found on [farmers.gov/cfap/apply](http://farmers.gov/cfap/apply).

### CFAP 2 Eligible Commodities Finder

Many more commodities are eligible for CFAP 2 than CFAP 1. Interested in finding the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 payment rates for the eligible commodities you grow or raise? Our new, easy-to-use [CFAP 2 Eligible Commodities Finder](#) makes finding payment rates specific to your operation simple. From yam to alpaca farmers – and everyone in between – the payment rate information you need is just a few clicks away. Try it today on your desktop, tablet, or mobile device.

### Call Center

A call center is available for producers who would like additional one-on-one support with the CFAP 2 application process. Please call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance. The call center can provide service to non-English speaking customers. Customers will select 1 for English and 2 to speak with a Spanish speaking employee. For other languages, customers select 1 and indicate their language to the call center staff.

## USDA Accepting Applications to Help Cover Costs for Organic Certification

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced that organic producers and handlers can apply for federal funds to assist with the cost of receiving and maintaining organic certification through the [Organic Certification Cost Share Program](#) (OCCSP). Applications for eligible certification expenses paid between Oct. 1, 2019, and Sept. 30, 2020, are due Oct. 31, 2020.

OCCSP provides cost-share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products for the costs of obtaining or maintaining organic certification under the USDA's National Organic Program. Eligible producers include any certified producers or handlers who have paid organic certification fees to a USDA-accredited certifying agent. Eligible expenses for cost-share reimbursement include application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement and arrangement requirements, travel expenses for inspectors, user fees, sales assessments and postage.

### Changes in Reimbursement

Due to expected participation levels for fiscal year 2020, FSA revised the reimbursement amount through fiscal year 2023. Certified producers and handlers are now eligible to receive reimbursement for up to 50 percent of the certified organic operation's eligible expenses, up to a maximum of \$500 per scope.

This change is due to the limited amount of funding available and will allow a larger number of certified organic operations to receive assistance. If additional funding is authorized later, FSA may provide additional assistance to certified operations that have applied for OCCSP, not to exceed 75 percent of their eligible costs, up to \$750 per scope.

The changes to the payment calculation and maximum payment amount are applicable to all certified organic operations, regardless of whether they apply through an FSA county office or a participating state agency. State agencies that are interested in overseeing reimbursements to producers and handlers in their states must establish new agreements with FSA for fiscal 2020.

### Opportunities for State Agencies

Today's announcement also includes the opportunity for state agencies to apply for grant agreements to administer the OCCSP program in fiscal 2020. State agencies that establish agreements for fiscal 2020 may be able to extend their agreements and receive additional funds to administer the program in future years.

FSA has not yet determined whether an additional application period will be announced for later years for state agencies that choose not to participate in fiscal 2020. States that would like to administer OCCSP for future years are encouraged to establish an agreement for 2020 to ensure that they will be able to continue to participate.

FSA will accept applications from state agencies for fiscal year 2020 funding for cost-share assistance from Aug. 10, 2020 through Sept. 9, 2020.

State Agencies must submit the Application for Federal Assistance (Standard Form 424 and 424B) electronically via Grants.gov, the Federal grants website, at <http://www.grants.gov>.

### **More Information**

To learn more about organic certification cost share, please visit the [OCCSP webpage](#), view the [notice of funds availability on the Federal Register](#), or contact the [FSA county office](#) at your local USDA Service Center.

To learn more about USDA support for organic agriculture, visit [usda.gov/organic](https://usda.gov/organic).

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## **USDA Announces Changes to Emergency Haying and Grazing Provisions**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) recently announced changes for emergency haying and grazing use of acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). This includes changes outlined in the 2018 Farm Bill that streamlines the authorization process for farmers and ranchers.

Drought conditions are tough for our livestock producers, but emergency haying and grazing use of Conservation Reserve Program acres provides temporary relief to these producers. Thanks to a streamlined authorization process, Wyoming producers will be able to more quickly obtain emergency use approval to begin emergency haying or grazing of CRP acres.

### **Program Changes**

Previously emergency haying and grazing requests originated with FSA at the county level and required state and national level approval. Now approval will be based on drought severity as determined by the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#).

To date, 20 counties in Wyoming have triggered eligibility for emergency haying and grazing on CRP acres. A [list by state and map](#) of eligible counties are updated weekly and available on FSA's website.

Producers located in a county that is designated as severe drought (D2) or greater on or after the last day of the primary nesting season are eligible for emergency haying and grazing on all eligible acres. Additionally, producers located in counties that were in a severe drought (D2) status any single week during the last eight weeks of the primary nesting season may also be eligible for emergency haying and grazing unless the FSA County Committee determines that forage conditions no longer warrant emergency haying and grazing.

Counties that trigger for [Livestock Forage Disaster Program](#) (LFP) payments based on the U.S. Drought Monitor may have only certain practices on less than 50% of eligible contract acres. Producers should contact their local FSA county office for eligible CRP practices.

Producers who don't meet the drought monitor qualifications but have a 40% loss of forage production may also be eligible for emergency haying and grazing outside of the primary nesting season.

### **CRP Emergency Haying and Grazing Provisions**

Before haying or grazing eligible acres, producers must submit a request for CRP emergency haying or grazing to FSA and obtain a modified conservation plan from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Emergency grazing is authorized for up to 90 days and emergency haying is authorized for up to 60 days. Program participants must stop haying and grazing 30 days before the first freeze date in the fall based on the dates established for LFP.

Under the emergency grazing provisions, producers can use the CRP acreage for their own livestock or may grant another livestock producer use of the CRP acreage. The eligible CRP acreage is limited to acres located within the approved county.

For emergency haying, producers are limited to one cutting and are permitted to sell the hay. Participants must remove all hay from CRP acreage within 15 days after baling and remove all livestock from CRP acreage no later than 1 day after the end of the emergency grazing period. There will be no CRP annual rental payment reduction for emergency haying and grazing authorizations.

### **More Information**

For more information on CRP emergency haying and grazing visit [fsa.usda.gov/crp](https://fsa.usda.gov/crp) or contact your FSA county office. To locate your FSA office, visit [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator). For more disaster recovery assistance programs, visit [farmers.gov/recover](https://farmers.gov/recover).

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## **FSA Implements Set-Aside Loan Provision for Customers Impacted by COVID-19**

### *Set-Aside Delays Loan Payments for Borrowers*

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will broaden the use of the Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) loan provision, normally used in the wake of natural disasters, to allow farmers with USDA farm loans who are affected by COVID-19, and are determined eligible, to have their next payment set aside. In some cases, FSA may also set aside a second payment for farmers who have already had one payment set aside because of a prior designated disaster.

FSA direct loan borrowers will receive a letter with the details of the expanded Disaster Set-Aside authorities, which includes the possible set-aside of annual operating loans, as well as explanations of the additional loan servicing options that are available. To discuss or request a loan payment Set-Aside, borrowers should call or email the farm loan staff at their local FSA county office.

The set-aside payment's due date is moved to the final maturity date of the loan or extended up to twelve months in the case of an annual operating loan. Any principal set-aside will continue to

accrue interest until it is repaid. This aims to improve the borrower's cashflow in the current production cycle.

FSA previously announced it was relaxing the loan-making process and adding flexibilities for servicing direct and guaranteed loans to provide credit to producers in need. Direct loan applicants and borrowers are encouraged to contact their local FSA county office to discuss loan making and servicing flexibilities and other needs or concerns. Customers participating in FSA's guaranteed loan programs are encouraged to contact their lender. Information on these flexibilities, and office contact information, can be found on [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

FSA will be accepting most forms and applications by facsimile or electronic signature. Some services are also available online to customers with an eAuth account, which provides access to the [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov) portal where producers can view USDA farm loan information and certain program applications and payments. Customers can track payments, report completed practices, request conservation assistance and electronically sign documents. Customers who do not already have an eAuth account can enroll at [farmers.gov/sign-in](https://farmers.gov/sign-in).

USDA Service Centers are open for business by phone appointment only, and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. While program delivery staff will continue to come into the office, they will be working with producers by phone and using online tools whenever possible. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service or any other Service Center agency are required to call their Service Center to schedule a phone appointment. More information can be found at [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

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## USDA Offers Secure New Options for Signing and Sharing Documents Online

Farmers and ranchers working with USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) or Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can now sign and share documents online in just a few clicks. By using Box or OneSpan, producers can digitally complete business transactions without leaving their homes or agricultural operations. Both services are free, secure, and available for multiple FSA and NRCS programs.

### About Box and OneSpan

Box is a secure, cloud-based site where FSA or NRCS documents can be managed and shared. Producers who choose to use Box can create a username and password to access their secure Box account, where documents can be downloaded, printed, manually signed, scanned, uploaded, and shared digitally with Service Center staff. This service is available to any FSA or NRCS customer with access to a mobile device or computer with printer connectivity.

OneSpan is a secure eSignature solution for FSA and NRCS customers. Like Box, no software downloads or eAuthentication is required for OneSpan. Instead, producers interested in eSignature through OneSpan can confirm their identity through two-factor authentication using a verification code sent to their mobile device or a personalized question and answer. Once identity is confirmed, documents can be reviewed and e-signed through OneSpan via the producer's personal email address. Signed documents immediately become available to the appropriate Service Center staff.

Box and OneSpan are both optional services for customers interested in improved efficiency in signing and sharing documents with USDA, and they do not replace existing systems using

eAuthentication for digital signature. Instead, these tools provide additional digital options for producers to use when conducting business with FSA or NRCS.

### Steps to Get Started

USDA Service Center staff are available to help producers get started with Box and OneSpan through a few simple steps. Please visit [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator) to find your local office and let Service Center staff know you're interested in signing and sharing documents through these new features. In most cases, one quick phone call will be all that is needed to initiate the process.

### More Information

Visit [farmers.gov/mydocs](https://farmers.gov/mydocs) to learn more about Box and OneSpan, steps for getting started, and additional resources for conducting business with USDA online.

To learn more about program flexibilities and Service Center status during the coronavirus pandemic, visit [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

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## Reminders for FSA Direct and Guaranteed Borrowers with Real Estate Security

Farm loan borrowers who have pledged real estate as security for their Farm Service Agency (FSA) direct or guaranteed loans are responsible for maintaining loan collateral. Borrowers must obtain prior consent or approval from FSA or the guaranteed lender for any transaction that affects real estate security. These transactions include, but are not limited to:

- Leases of any kind
- Easements of any kind
- Subordinations
- Partial releases
- Sales

Failure to meet or follow the requirements 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](#).

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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).