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Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

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Wyoming FSA Newsletter

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State Executive Director:
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State Committee:
Nancy Tarver - Chair
David Slover - Member
Lee Craig - Member
Ronald Givens - Member
Pete Arambel - Member

Message from the State Executive Director

Happy Holidays!! Year end is a great time to reflect and thank Wyoming FSA employees for their hard work, leadership, and dedication in making FSA the best agency. It is also a great time to thank our agricultural producers for being great customers and producing the safest and highest quality food in the world. We will continue to work hard for our producers in 2021!

2020 has been a very tough year! Wyoming FSA continued to deliver crucial safety net, disaster assistance, farm loan and conservation programs to our farmers and ranchers. We have weathered the unpredictable, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters. We've also spent the past year working to optimize program delivery and find better and modern ways to serve our customers. I encourage you to read the below article for specific accomplishments.

I would also like to thank our FSA State Committee for their outstanding service, guidance, and commitment to the Wyoming agriculture industry over the last three and a half years. I would like

To find contact information for your local office go to www.fsa.usda.gov/wy.

to give a special thanks to Nancy Tarver, Livestock producer in Campbell County for her service as Chairman; to David Slover, livestock producer in Washakie County as member; Lee Craig, livestock and crop producer in Park County as member; to Ronald Givens, Livestock and crop producer in Fremont County as member; and to Pete Arambel, Livestock producer in Sweetwater County as member. These producers have provided tremendous insight and assistance in the effective implementation of FSA programs statewide. Again, I sincerely thank Nancy, David, Lee, Ronnie, and Pete for their dedication and commitment to serve.

FSA County Committee elections were held this month and I am excited about getting our new members on board. All sixteen County Offices conduct committee elections every year which provides the basic structure of how our agency functions and operates. Each Committee has three to five members who serve three-year terms and are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm and ranch programs at the local level and work hard to make sure those programs serve the needs of producers. FSA County Offices will publish election results next month and I strongly encourage every producer to get to know their county committee members.

And lastly, our county offices are temporarily restricting in-person visits because of the elevated spread of coronavirus, but our employees will continue to assist agricultural producers with programs and services. So, we are still open, and providing service by mail, email, phone, and other means. Please know our employees are still there to help you, in any way that they can!

Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

-Lois Van MARK-

FSA Quickly Implemented Crucial Programs Amid Challenging Year

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) helped farmers, livestock producers and foresters weather a tough 2020, marked with a pandemic and natural disasters. During the COVID-19 pandemic, FSA continued to deliver farm programs to producers through phone and online tools, using social distancing guidelines. The agency also provided extra flexibilities to its programs, adjusting reporting dates and loan processing timelines, and continued to expand technology and streamline services to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

"Through this tough year, FSA continued to deliver crucial safety net, disaster assistance, farm loan and conservation programs to Wyoming's farmers and livestock producers," said Lois Van MARK, FSA's State Executive Director in Wyoming. "We partner with agricultural producers to grow and expand their operations as well as weather the unpredictable, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters. We've also spent the past year working to optimize program delivery and find better and modern ways to serve our customers in Wyoming."

Key highlights from 2020 include:

Support amid COVID-19 Pandemic: FSA worked with economists and commodity specialist across USDA to quickly build and deliver two rounds of the [Coronavirus Food Assistance Program \(CFAP\)](#), which provides financial assistance to help producers absorb some of the increased marketing costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The deadline to apply for almost all commodities was last week, and so far, the two rounds of funding have provided nearly \$23 billion in relief, including \$ 147,178,579 in Wyoming. Additionally, FSA has added flexibilities to its farm credit options, including loan servicing and enabling a disaster set-aside option to defer a loan payment.

Disaster Assistance: Natural disasters, including wildfires in the West, hurricanes along the Gulf Coast, the derecho in the Midwest and widespread severe drought, took a toll on U.S. agriculture in 2020. Through FSA's suite of disaster assistance programs, producers received more than \$212 million to help offset disaster-related losses in 2020. Additionally, FSA added drought and excess moisture as eligible causes of loss for the [Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program – Plus program](#), which provided much-needed assistance to help producers impacted by 2018 and 2019 natural disasters. In total, the program provided \$1.24 billion in relief.

Farm Credit: FSA helps farmers and ranchers get the financing they need to start, expand or maintain a family farm. This past year, FSA obligated more than \$7.5 billion in direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans, the highest in agency history. This includes more than \$3.4 billion for beginning farmers, also an agency record. The 2018 Farm Bill raised the amount producers can borrow, and FSA has seen sharp demand for loans in the past year, especially direct and guaranteed farm ownership loans. Meanwhile, FSA provided low-interest financing to producers to build or upgrade storage facilities and to purchase portable structures, equipment and storage and handling trucks through the Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program. FSA obligated a record \$340 million in fiscal year 2020. Finally, FSA provided producers with more than \$600 million in interim financing in fiscal year 2020 through marketing assistance loans, which help producers meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are low.

Safety Net Programs: FSA held 2020 enrollment for the [Agricultural Risk Coverage \(ARC\) and Price Loss Coverage \(PLC\) programs](#), where producers signed more than 1.7 million contracts. Election and enrollment for 2021 ARC and PLC is underway, and those enrolled for the 2019 crop year received more than \$5 billion in payments earlier this fall.

Conservation: FSA held its 54th general signup for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), the first since 2016, and enrolled 3.4 million acres nationwide into the program, including 29,007 in Wyoming. Additionally, FSA rolled out two new CRP pilots, the Soil Health and Income Protection Program and CLEAR30, and is preparing for next year with the CRP general signup beginning Jan. 4, 2021 and the CRP Grasslands signup beginning March 15, 2021.

Critical Program Delivery: FSA worked closely with the FPAC Business Center OCE, OGC, and AMS to build and implement programs during the pandemic, including CFAP 1, CFAP 2, and the Seafood Trade Relief Program (STRP). CFAP 2 was developed and deployed within six weeks. Through STRP, FSA helped U.S. fishermen who have been impacted by unfair retaliatory tariffs from foreign governments. Signup is ongoing for STRP through Jan. 15, and so far, FSA has approved 6,300 applications for more than \$154 million in relief payments. Additionally, because many applicants applying for CFAP and STRP had not worked with FSA previously, the agency stood up a call center to help producers ask questions about FSA programs and get a jump start on program applications. The call center has received over 25,000 calls, including over 800 in Spanish, since its inception in May.

FSA is a part of the Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) mission area at USDA. Other 2020 highlights can be found [here](#).

All USDA Service Centers are open for business, including those that restrict in-person visits or require appointments. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service or any other Service Center agency should call ahead and schedule an appointment. Service Centers that are open for appointments will pre-screen visitors based on health concerns or recent travel, and visitors must adhere to social distancing guidelines. Visitors are also required to wear a face covering during their appointment. Our program delivery staff will continue to work with our producers by phone, email and using online tools. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

Ask USDA available to answer questions about FSA programs

Ask USDA is now available as a tool for FSA customers to ask questions about FSA programs and services.

Ask USDA, available at ask.usda.gov is similar to AskFSA, which was decommissioned Sept. 21, but it also provides information for all USDA programs. Ask USDA allows USDA customers to search for and read answers about FSA programs and services in the same location as they read about other USDA programs and services.

Customers are able to submit questions through email, chat, and phone if they need more information. This improved customer service approach further builds on Secretary Sonny Perdue's OneUSDA vision and provides the customer a one-stop shopping experience that covers all of USDA's many programs.

Actively Engaged Provisions for Non-Family Joint Operations or Entities

Many Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs require all program participants, either individuals or legal entities, to be "actively engaged in farming." This means participants provide a significant contribution to the farming operation, whether it is capital, land, equipment, active personal labor and/or management. For entities, each partner, stockholder or member with an ownership interest, must contribute active personal labor and/or management to the operation on a regular basis that is identifiable and documentable as well as separate and distinct from contributions of any other member. Members of joint operations must have a share of the profits or losses from the farming operation commensurate with the member's contributions to the operation and must make contributions to the farming operation that are at risk for a loss, with the level of risk being commensurate with the member's claimed share on the farming operation.

Joint operations comprised of non-family members or partners, stockholders or persons with an ownership in the farming operation must meet additional payment eligibility provisions. Joint operations comprised of family members are exempt from these additional requirements. For 2016 and subsequent crop years, non-family joint operations can have one member that may use a significant contribution of active personal management exclusively to meet the requirements to be

determined “actively engaged in farming.” The person or member will be defined as the farm manager for the purposes of administering these management provisions.

Non-family joint operations may request to add up to two additional managers for their farming operation based on the size and/or complexity of the operation. If additional farm managers are requested and approved, all members who contribute management are required to complete form CCC-902MR, *Management Activity Record*. The farm manager should use the form to record management activities including capital, labor and agronomics, which includes crop selection, planting decisions, acquisition of inputs, crop management and marketing decisions. One form should be used for each month and the farm manager should enter the number of hours of time spent for each activity under the date of the month the actions were completed. The farm manager must also document if each management activity was completed on the farm or remotely.

The records and supporting business documentation must be maintained and timely made available for review by the appropriate FSA reviewing authority, if requested.

If the farm manager fails to meet these requirements, their contribution of active personal management to the farming operation for payment eligibility purposes will be disregarded and their payment eligibility status will be re-determined for the applicable program year.

In some instances, additional persons or members of a non-family member joint operation who meet the definition of farm manager may also be allowed to use such a contribution of active personal management to meet the eligibility requirements. However, under no circumstances may the number of farm managers in a non-family joint operation exceed a total of three in any given crop and program year.

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

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.

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 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.

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](#).

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).