

April 2020



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# BULLETIN

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## Crook County FSA Updates

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Phone: 307-283-2870  
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**County Executive Director:**  
Sarah Hanlon

**Farm Loan Manager:**  
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**Program Technicians:**  
Susan Johnson  
Pam Schurman

**County Committee:**  
Ivan Cranston  
Jeanne Habeck  
Alan Ista  
Colter Ellsbury

### County Office Notes

Hi everyone!

I have several important messages for you all today. I want to start by making sure you know that we are **OPEN** and providing all of the services that you expect from us. However, our Service Center will be locked and will not be accessible to visitors until further notice, but we are providing service by phone, email, and mail. We also have a locked box located in front of the office, if you have items you are wanting to drop off directly.

Along with this, in order to maintain appropriate social distancing, we have been asked to reduce the number of staff members working on site each day. So, if you are directed to voicemail when you call, or if you get a phone that rings without going to voicemail, we are likely on another line, and we will get back to you as quickly as possible. So, please leave a voicemail if you are able, and if not, please try us again! You can also email [sarah.hanlon@usda.gov](mailto:sarah.hanlon@usda.gov) for FSA, and [keela.deaton@usda.gov](mailto:keela.deaton@usda.gov) for NRCS if you have questions or are having difficulty reaching us for any reason.

With many of us increasing the amount of service we are providing via teleworking, please be aware that you may receive phone calls from us from phone numbers that you do not normally associate with the office. Several of us have cell phone numbers that are out of county and even out of state numbers. If you are ever unsure if the person requesting information is associated with the office, please call into the office to confirm.

**Next County Committee Meeting:**

May 19, 2020 @ 11:00 AM

## **Wednesday Workshop Update**

As you know, we have a **Wednesday Workshop** scheduled for this Wednesday, **April 8th, at 2:00 PM**. The workshop is still happening, we are simply moving it virtual!

If you are not already following "Crook County Natural Resource District" on Facebook, please do so. **We will be livestreaming the workshop from the District's Facebook page.** We can also answer any questions or concerns you have about programs or the office at that time. The other benefit to this livestream workshop, is the video will still be available after the recording is completed. So, if you cannot join us on April 8th at 2:00 PM, take advantage of the opportunity to watch it later.

## **Crop Reporting**

We are working on our spring crop reporting schedule, and this year it may require a bit of extra planning. We may be contacting you to determine if you intend to plant, and when you expect planting to be completed. If you are not doing any spring planting, or have completed your planting, call us! We can get your 2020 acreage report sent to you for signature right away. We can also provide you with copies of your maps to assist you in completing your reporting. Remember that all 2020 acreage reports, as well as 2019 NAP production must be completed by July 15, 2020.

**As always, please remember to report crop and honey bee losses within 15 days, and livestock losses within 30 days of the loss being apparent.**

Lastly, the Crook County Natural Resource District is hiring! The Crook County Natural Resource District is seeking a part-time Conservation Field Technician to assist with water quality sampling and soil health assessments for the 2020 and 2021 field season. If you are interested in this position, please submit a cover letter, resume, and two (2) letters of reference to Carmen McIntyre at [chmcintyre.ccnrd@gmail.com](mailto:chmcintyre.ccnrd@gmail.com) by 5:00pm on May 1st, 2020. Please contact CCNRD with any questions.

Thank you for reading, and stay healthy!

Sarah

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## **Maps for Acreage Reporting**

Maps are now available at the Crook County FSA Office for acreage reporting purposes. If you wish to receive your maps by e-mail, please call our office or email Sarah Hanlon at [sarah.hanlon@usda.gov](mailto:sarah.hanlon@usda.gov) or Pam Schurman at [pamela.schurman@usda.gov](mailto:pamela.schurman@usda.gov). Please see the following acreage reporting deadlines for Crook County:

- July 15, 2020: Spring planted crops, perennial forages (both grazing and hay)
- November 16, 2020: Fall planted crops, honey

In order to maintain program eligibility and benefits, producers must timely file acreage reports. Failure to file an acreage report by the crop acreage reporting deadline may result in ineligibility for future program benefits. Acreage reports submitted after the listed deadlines will be charged a late filing fee per late reported farm, and will require a spot check. FSA will not accept acreage reports provided more than a year after the acreage reporting deadline.

Producers are encouraged to file their acreage reports as soon as planting is completed.

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## New Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their Operation

A new online tool can help farmers and ranchers find information on U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) farm loans that may best fit their operations. USDA has launched the new *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* as the newest feature on farmers.gov, the Department's self-service website for farmers.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers a variety of loan options to help farmers finance their operations. From buying land to financing the purchase of equipment, FSA loans can help. Compared to this time last year, FSA has seen an 18 percent increase in the amount it has obligated for direct farm ownership loans, and through the 2018 Farm Bill, has [increased the limits](#) for several loan products.

USDA conducted field research in eight states, gathering input from farmers and FSA farm loan staff to better understand their needs and challenges.

### How the Tool Works

Farmers who are looking for financing options to operate a farm or buy land can answer a few simple questions about what they are looking to fund and how much money they need to borrow. After submitting their answers, farmers will be provided information on farm loans that best fit their specific needs. The loan application and additional resources also will be provided.

Farmers can download application quick guides that outline what to expect from preparing an application to receiving a loan decision. There are four guides that cover loans to individuals, entities, and youth, as well as information on microloans. The guides include general eligibility requirements and a list of required forms and documentation for each type of loan. These guides can help farmers prepare before their first USDA service center visit with a loan officer.

Farmers can access the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* by visiting [farmers.gov/fund](https://farmers.gov/fund) and clicking the "Start" button. Follow the prompts and answer five simple questions to receive loan information that is applicable to your agricultural operation. The tool is built to run on any modern browser like Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or the Safari browser, and is fully functional on mobile devices. It does not work in Internet Explorer.

### About Farmers.gov

In 2018, USDA unveiled farmers.gov, a dynamic, mobile-friendly public website combined with an authenticated portal where farmers will be able to apply for programs, process transactions, and manage accounts.

The *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* is one of many resources on farmers.gov to help connect farmers to information that can help their operations. Earlier this year, USDA launched the *My Financial Information* feature, which enables farmers to view their loan information, history, payments, and alerts by logging into the website.

USDA is building farmers.gov for farmers, by farmers. In addition to the interactive farm loan features, the site also offers a Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool. Farmers can visit [farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool/#step-1](https://farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool/#step-1) to find disaster assistance programs that can help their operation recover from natural disasters.

With feedback from customers and field employees who serve those customers, farmers.gov delivers farmer-focused features through an agile, iterative process to deliver the greatest immediate value to America's agricultural producers – helping farmers and ranchers do right, and feed everyone.

For more information or to locate your USDA Service Center, visit [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov).

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## USDA's Conservation Reserve Program Grasslands Signup

Farmers and ranchers may apply to enroll grasslands in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands signup. The signup runs through May 15.

Through CRP Grasslands, participants retain the right to conduct common grazing practices, such as haying, mowing or harvesting seed from the enrolled land. Timing of some activities may be restricted by the primary nesting season of birds.

Participants will receive an annual rental payment and may receive up to 50 percent cost-share for establishing approved conservation practices. The duration of the CRP contract is either 10 or 15 years. FSA will rank applications using a number of factors including existence of expiring CRP land, threat of conversion or development, existing grassland, and predominance of native species cover, and cost.

The 2018 Farm Bill set aside 2 million acres for CRP Grassland enrollment. CRP is one of the largest conservation programs at USDA. CRP marks its 35-year anniversary in 2020 with 22 million acres currently enrolled.

For more information or to enroll in CRP Grasslands, contact your local FSA county office or visit [fsa.usda.gov/crp](https://fsa.usda.gov/crp). To locate your local FSA office, visit [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator).

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Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting should contact [Sarah Hanlon](#) at [307-283-2870](tel:307-283-2870) extension 2 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

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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).