



APRIL 2020

## Niobrara County FSA Office

905 S Main St / PO Box 720  
Lusk, WY 82225

Phone: 307-334-2953, Ext. 2  
Fax: 855-415-3433

### Office Hours

8:00 am - 4:30 pm  
Monday - Friday

### County Executive Director

Laura Kessler  
[laura.kessler@usda.gov](mailto:laura.kessler@usda.gov)

### Program Technician

Kimberly Nusbaum  
[kimberly.nusbaum@usda.gov](mailto:kimberly.nusbaum@usda.gov)

### Farm Loan Manager

Dixie Mount  
307-322-4050  
[dixie.mount@usda.gov](mailto:dixie.mount@usda.gov)

### County Committee

Jason ZumBrunnen, Chairman  
Joe Kruse, Vice Chairman  
Kurt Gaukel, Member  
Carol Geisinger, Minority Advisor

**Next County Committee Meeting:**  
TBD

## IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

April 1st - NAP purchase deadline  
for Spring Seeded Crops

June 30th - Deadline to enroll 2020  
ARC/PLC Contracts

30 Days - Contact the office to  
report adverse weather conditions  
& livestock losses within 30 days of  
realizing the loss

15 Days - File notice of loss on NAP  
covered crops 15 days after  
realizing loss

## NIOBRARA COUNTY NOTES

Greetings Niobrara County Farmers and Ranchers!

We just want to keep you informed of how we can best serve our producers during this time of constant change. Please read the COVID-19 article below for how we will be conducting business, hopefully for a short period of time.

We have a few deadlines that we would like to remind producers of. The last day to purchase coverage on spring-seeded crops for 2020 under the Non-Insured Assistance Program is April 1<sup>st</sup>. As spring crops are being planted, we will be taking acreage reports through July 15<sup>th</sup> for 2020 crops.

We would also like to remind producers that we are currently in a Conservation Reserve Program – Grasslands (CRP-G) sign up until May 15, 2020. If you would like to know more about this program, please read the article located on Page 2 and contact us with any further questions you may have. If we are past the need for social distancing we will be having an informational meeting about CRP-G on April 15<sup>th</sup>, along with information on the Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFL). If you would like more information on FSFL please read the article and contact the office with any additional questions.

Now that many of you are calving and lambing, we also would like to remind you that if you suffer any losses due to adverse weather to notify the office within 30 days of the loss being apparent to you, to file your Notice of Loss (NOL). It only takes a phone call to put the NOL on file. We will only proceed with paperwork if you so choose in the future but if you wait thinking you have only lost a few and you pass the 30 day deadline—you risk costing yourself potential program benefits.

Most important we hope that everyone stays healthy and safe. If you have any questions or need additional information on any program we offer, please contact the office and we will be happy to help with any questions you may have.

- Niobrara County FSA Staff

## USDA SERVICE CENTERS TAKING PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES TO HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS

U.S. Department of Agriculture Service Centers are encouraging visitors to take proactive protective measures to help prevent the spread of coronavirus.

As part of our commitment to farmers and ranchers, USDA Service Centers will continue to be open for business by phone appointment only and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. While our FSA and NRCS program delivery staff at the Service Centers will continue to come into the office, they will be working with our producers by phone, and using online tools whenever possible.

Producers can find their Service Center's phone number at [farmers.gov/service-center-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-center-locator) and more information about Coronavirus and USDA Service Centers at <https://www.farmers.gov/coronavirus>.

## USDA'S CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM GRASSLANDS SIGNUP BEGINS MARCH 16

Farmers and ranchers may apply to enroll grasslands in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands signup beginning March 16. 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](http://fsa.usda.gov/crp). To locate your local FSA office, visit [farmers.gov/service-locator](http://farmers.gov/service-locator).

## SAVE TIME - MAKE AN APPOINTMENT

Producers are encouraged to call their local FSA office to schedule an appointment to ensure maximum use of their time and to make sure FSA staff is available to tend to their important business needs. Please call your local FSA office ahead of your visit to set an appointment and to discuss any records or documentation that might be needed during your appointment. To find your local FSA office, visit: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>.

## FARM and OPERATION CHANGES

FSA needs to keep records updated at all times. If you have had any of the following changes, please report them to our office so we can update our records accordingly:

Individual or business names, phone numbers or addresses, shares or membership changes to entities, deeding land into a trust, sold or purchased property, added or dropped leased land.

## FARM STORAGE FACILITY LOANS

FSA's Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program provides low-interest financing to producers to build or upgrade storage facilities and to purchase portable (new or used) structures, equipment and storage and handling trucks.

The low-interest funds can be used to build or upgrade permanent facilities to store commodities. Eligible commodities include corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley, minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain, pulse crops (lentils, chickpeas and dry peas), hay, honey, renewable biomass, fruits, nuts and vegetables for cold storage facilities, floriculture, hops, maple sap, rye, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, meat and poultry (unprocessed), eggs, and aquaculture (excluding systems that maintain live animals through uptake and discharge of water). Qualified facilities include grain bins, hay barns and cold storage facilities for eligible commodities.

Loans up to \$50,000 can be secured by a promissory note/security agreement and loans between \$50,000 and \$100,000 may require additional security. Loans exceeding \$100,000 require additional security.

Producers do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply. The loans are designed to assist a diverse range of farming operations, including small and mid-sized businesses, new farmers, operations supplying local food and farmers markets, non-traditional farm products, and underserved producers.

To learn more about the FSA Farm Storage Facility Loan, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport) or contact your local FSA county office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

## GOV-DELIVERY – ELECTRONIC COUNTY OFFICE BULLETINS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) announces that farmers and ranchers in Wyoming now can receive notifications thru email. To receive GovDelivery email notifications, subscribe online at [www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe) or contact the Niobrara County FSA office for subscription assistance. Producers can establish subscriber preferences by choosing to receive federal farm program information by topic, by state or by county. Producers can select as many subscriber options as they want, which allows producers who farm in multiple counties or across state lines to receive updates from each county in which they operate or have an interest.

## LIVESTOCK LOSSES

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides assistance to eligible producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by adverse weather, disease and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law.

LIP compensates livestock owners and contract growers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather, including losses due to hurricanes, floods, blizzards, wildfires, extreme heat or extreme cold.

For disease losses, FSA county committees can accept veterinarian certifications that livestock deaths were directly related to adverse weather and unpreventable through good animal husbandry and management.

For 2020 livestock losses, eligible livestock owners must file a notice within 30 calendar days of when the loss is first apparent.

Participants must provide the following supporting documentation to their local FSA office no later than 60 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the eligible loss condition occurred.

- Proof of death documentation
- Copy of grower's contracts
- Proof of normal mortality documentation

USDA has established normal mortality rates for each type and weight range of eligible livestock, i.e. Adult Beef Cow = 2% and Non-Adult Beef Cattle (less than 400 pounds) = 4.3%. These established percentages reflect losses that are considered expected or typical under "normal" conditions.

In addition to filing a notice of loss, producers must also submit an application for payment by March 1, 2021.

Additional Information about LIP is available at your local FSA office or online at: [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

## 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 Niobrara County FSA office at 307-334-2953.

## LIVESTOCK INVENTORY RECORDS

Producers are reminded to keep updated livestock inventory records. These records are necessary in the event of a natural disaster.

When disasters strike, the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) can assist producers who suffered excessive livestock death losses and grazing or feed losses due to eligible natural disasters.

To participate in livestock disaster assistance programs, producers will be required to provide verifiable documentation of death losses resulting from an eligible adverse weather event and must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is apparent. For grazing or feed losses, producers must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent and should maintain documentation and receipts.

Producers should record all pertinent information regarding livestock inventory records including:

- Documentation of the number, kind, type, and weight range of livestock
- Beginning inventory supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts;

For more information on documentation requirements, contact your local FSA office.

## BEGINNING FARMER LOANS

FSA assists beginning farmers to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's average size farm.

Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

NIOBRARA COUNTY FSA OFFICE  
PO BOX 720  
LUSK, WY 82225-0720

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To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, \*--or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the form call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture

Office of the Assistant Secretary of Civil Rights

1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.

Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

fax to (202) 690-7442

e-mail at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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