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## Farm Service Agency Electronic News Service

# BULLETIN

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## Niobrara County FSA Updates

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### Niobrara County Notes

Greetings Niobrara County Farmers and Ranchers!

Spring seems to finally be here. We hope that everyone is doing well. We wanted to inform our producers that we are still operating with the doors closed to the public; however, we are able to conduct any business via phone, email, fax or if you need to stop by we have the ability to leave documents for you in our foyer just inside the front door.

Our new program, the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) requires producers to gather information to apply for the program. Please see the below article for more detailed information on the program. We have a questionnaire in the office that we can get to you in order to make your information gathering a much easier process. Please contact our office and we will get it to you ASAP, however you would like it delivered, via email, mail, fax or stopping by our office building. We are happy to help you in any way we can to make the process of applying for this program as easy as possible.

Please also remember that many of you will need to update your acreage reports with your spring plantings, or need to complete them in general. If you are a producer who plants in the spring, please contact us as soon as you are complete so we can get you scheduled for an appointment as our office workload is very high right now. Although we are doing business differently than normal, we have many different methods we can use to work

**Next County Committee Meeting: TBD**

around this, so please give us a call. We are currently taking a high volume of calls, so if you get our voicemail, please leave a message so that we can get back to you as soon as possible.

On another note, we are hearing from many of you that conditions are starting to get dry. If you carry Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for drought please remember you need to put a notice of loss on file at the office within 15 days when it becomes apparent to you that you will have a loss on any of the crops you have covered, including pasture. If you are going to file a loss on hay crops, please remember if you are choosing not to harvest at all, even a small portion, we will need to send an appraiser out to adjust those acres BEFORE you turn livestock out to graze.

Stay safe and healthy, hopefully we will be back to business as normal very soon. We miss seeing everyone! - Niobrara County FSA Staff

**Please note the following important dates and deadlines:**

June 30<sup>th</sup> – Deadline to enroll 2020 ARC/PLC contracts

July 3<sup>rd</sup> – OFFICE CLOSED – In Lieu of Independence Day

July 15<sup>th</sup> – Spring seeded & perennial crop reporting deadline 2020

Within 15 days of noticing crop loss – File NAP Notice of Loss

Within 30 days of noticing livestock loss – File LIP Notice of Loss

Within 30 days of livestock feed or pasture losses/issues due to extreme weather – File ELAP Notice of Loss

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## **Farmers and Ranchers in Wyoming Can Now Apply for Financial Assistance through USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program**

### *Online Tools and Toll-Free Number Available to Assist Producers*

Agricultural producers can now apply for USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), which provides direct payments to offset impacts from the coronavirus pandemic. The application and a payment calculator are now available online, and USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) staff members are available via phone, fax and online tools to help producers complete applications. The agency set up a call center in order to simplify how they serve new customers across the nation.

Applications will be accepted through August 28, 2020. Through CFAP, USDA is making available \$16 billion for vital financial assistance to producers of agricultural commodities who have suffered a five-percent-or-greater price decline due to COVID-19 and face additional significant marketing costs as a result of lower demand, surplus production, and disruptions to shipping patterns and the orderly marketing of commodities.

We also want to remind producers that the program is structured to ensure the availability of funding for all eligible producers who apply.

In order to do this, producers will receive 80 percent of their maximum total payment upon approval of the application. The remaining portion of the payment, not to exceed the payment limit, will be paid at a later date nationwide, as funds remain available.

Producers can download the CFAP application and other eligibility forms from [farmers.gov/cfap](https://farmers.gov/cfap). Also, on that webpage, producers can find a payment calculator to help identify sales and inventory records needed to apply and calculate potential payments.

Additionally, producers in search of one-on-one support with the CFAP application process can call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance. This is a good first step before a producer engages the team at the FSA county office at their local USDA Service Center.

### **Applying for Assistance**

Producers of all eligible commodities will apply through their local FSA office. Those who use the online calculator tool will be able to print off a pre-filled CFAP application, sign, and submit to your local FSA office either electronically or via hand delivery. Please contact your local office to determine the preferred method. Find contact information for your local office at [farmers.gov/cfap](https://farmers.gov/cfap).

Documentation to support the producer's application and certification may be requested after the application is filed. FSA has streamlined the signup process to not require an acreage report at the time of application and a USDA farm number may not be immediately needed.

### **Additional Commodities**

USDA is also establishing a process for the public to identify additional commodities for potential inclusion in CFAP. Specifically, USDA is looking for data on agricultural commodities, that are not currently eligible for CFAP, that the public believes to have either:

1. suffered a five percent-or-greater price decline between mid-January and mid-April as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic,
2. shipped but subsequently spoiled due to loss of marketing channel, or
3. not left the farm or remained unharvested as mature crops.

More information about this process is available on [farmers.gov/cfap](https://farmers.gov/cfap).

### **More Information**

To find the latest information on CFAP, visit [farmers.gov/cfap](https://farmers.gov/cfap) or call 877-508-8364.

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 Reminds Producers to Complete Crop Acreage Reports

The Niobrara County office for USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is currently open to phone and virtual appointments only but can still work with producers on timely filing crop acreage reports. FSA staff can provide assistance over the phone, by email and through virtual meetings via Microsoft Teams.

**The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for Niobrara County:**

**July 15, 2020**                      **Perennial and Spring Seeded Crops**

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers must file an accurate crop acreage report by the applicable deadline. FSA staff is still able to assist producers in completing acreage reports, including providing maps.

The Niobrara County FSA office can provide maps to producers through mail or email with instructions for completing the maps. After planting is complete, producers should return completed maps and the acreage reporting sheet by mail, email, fax or in person by July 1, if possible.

After completed maps and all acreage reporting information is received, FSA will make software updates and mail or email producers the completed *Report of Acreage* form (FSA-578) to sign. Producers must return the signed form certifying their acreage report to the FSA office through mail, email, fax or in person by July 15.

The following exceptions apply to acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.

Producers should also report crop acreage they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were unable to plant. Prevented planting acreage must be reported on form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and USDA's Risk Management Agency.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP-covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

If you have applied for organic certification and do not receive it before the acreage reporting deadline, you may provide the necessary documentation to FSA immediately upon receipt from the certifying agent.

For questions, please contact FSA's Niobrara County office at 307-334-2953, Ext. 2.

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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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Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting should contact [Laura Kessler](#) at [307-334-2953](tel:307-334-2953) 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).