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Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

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Niobrara County FSA Updates

Niobrara County Farm Service Agency

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Niobrara County Notes

Greetings Niobrara County Farmers and Ranchers!

It has been an extremely busy summer. We have been sending numerous "help sheets" out for you to gather numbers for various programs. Please know, we understand that this can be confusing with all the different programs available, each using different animal weight ranges and types, and time frames, for each different program. When you are gathering your information, please gather your data for each program only looking at the help sheet for that particular program, as they are different.

We are currently working with Livestock Forage Program (LFP), Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) 2.0, Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP), Non-Insured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) as well as trying to get your crop reporting done for 2021 crop year. I have put a synopsis of each below so that you can determine what programs you need to be concerned with for your specific operation. Please note the descriptions below are very brief and specific to Niobrara County. There may be additional crops/commodities available and

County Committee:

Jason ZumBrunnen
Joe Kruse
Kurt Gaukel

Carol Geisinger, COC Advisor

Next County Committee

Meeting: October 20, 2020

other rules may apply, so please be aware that there is no guarantee of program eligibility with the general categories stated below.

LFP – Anyone who has risk in grazing land **AND** livestock and have suffered a grazing loss due to the drought conditions may apply. This is a more complex program that will likely require an in-person appointment to complete the application.

CFAP 2.0 – Eligible commodities include cattle, pigs, and sheep (excluding breeding livestock, in example, cows that have produced a calf and bulls that have been used to breed). Wool or goat sales in 2019 and 2020 crops such as barley, corn, sorghum, wheat, alfalfa, millet, oats, rye or triticale. This program can be done very easily, and your information can be taken via mail, email or phone, please call the phone for an information sheet or for any questions you have.

ECP – Anyone who has lost use of a pasture due to creeks, ponds or another source of water that has dried up due to the drought can be eligible for cost share on water development such as pipe and tanks, drilling a well, etc. This can also include converting a windmill to solar if the windmill could not keep up this summer due to the drought. In-person appointments are recommended. Please see the below article for more specific details.

ELAP – Anyone who has had to haul water due to the drought can potentially be eligible for cost share to help compensate for costs of this activity. Another potential use of ELAP is feed losses (grazing or 2020 harvested feed) due to wildfire or hail.

NAP – This is an insurance that covers drought and other weather-related disasters. For the 2020 crop year this had to be purchased by December 1, 2019. To purchase coverage for the 2021 crop year, the deadline to do so is December 1, 2020, but can be done at any time. The cost for each crop (grass is a crop) is \$325 by administrative county. There are also many options for covering annual crops that are not covered by crop insurance, please visit with the office about these options if you are interested in learning more.

I know this is a lot of information to digest so please feel free to contact the office if you have any questions on any program that we are currently administering.

Please note the following important dates and deadlines:

October 12, 2020 – Office Closed – Columbus Day Holiday

November 16, 2020 – Acreage Reporting Deadline for Fall-Seeded Crops

December 1, 2020 – Deadline to purchase NAP Coverage for 2021

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

Within 30 days of noticing livestock, pasture, or feed loss – File LIP/ELAP Notice of Loss

USDA to Provide Additional Direct Assistance to Farmers and Ranchers Impacted by the Coronavirus

USDA announced up to an additional \$14 billion for agricultural producers who continue to face market disruptions and associated costs because of COVID-19. Signup for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP 2) will begin September 21 and run through December 11, 2020.

Background:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will use funds being made available from the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) Charter Act and CARES Act to support row crops, livestock, specialty crops, dairy, aquaculture and many additional commodities. USDA has incorporated improvements in CFAP 2 based from stakeholder engagement and public feedback to better meet the needs of impacted farmers and ranchers.

Producers can apply for CFAP 2 at USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) county offices. This program provides financial assistance that gives producers the ability to absorb increased marketing costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Producers will be compensated for ongoing market disruptions and assisted with the associated marketing costs.

CFAP 2 payments will be made for three categories of commodities – Price Trigger Commodities, Flat-rate Crops and Sales Commodities.

Price Trigger Commodities Price trigger commodities are major commodities that meet a minimum 5-percent price decline over a specified period of time. Eligible price trigger crops include barley, corn, sorghum, soybeans, sunflowers, upland cotton, and all classes of wheat. Payments will be based on 2020 planted acres of the crop, excluding prevented planting and experimental acres. Payments for price trigger crops will be the greater of: 1) the eligible acres multiplied by a payment rate of \$15 per acre; or 2) the eligible acres multiplied by a nationwide crop marketing percentage, multiplied by a crop-specific payment rate, and then by the producer's weighted 2020 Actual Production History (APH) approved yield. If the APH is not available, 85 percent of the 2019 Agriculture Risk Coverage-County Option (ARC-CO) benchmark yield for that crop will be used.

For broilers and eggs, payments will be based on 75 percent of the producers' 2019 production.

Dairy (cow's milk) payments will be based on actual milk production from April 1 to Aug. 31, 2020. The milk production for Sept. 1, 2020, to Dec. 31, 2020, will be estimated by FSA.

Eligible beef cattle, hogs and pigs, and lambs and sheep payments will be based on the maximum owned inventory of eligible livestock, excluding breeding stock, on a date selected by the producer, between Apr. 16, 2020, and Aug. 31, 2020.

Flat-rate Crops Crops that either do not meet the 5-percent price decline trigger or do not have data available to calculate a price change will have payments calculated based on eligible 2020

acres multiplied by \$15 per acre. These crops include alfalfa, extra long staple (ELS) cotton, oats, peanuts, rice, hemp, millet, mustard, safflower, sesame, triticale, rapeseed, and several others.

Sales Commodities Sales commodities include specialty crops; aquaculture; nursery crops and floriculture; other commodities not included in the price trigger and flat-rate categories, including tobacco; goat milk; mink (including pelts); mohair; wool; and other livestock (excluding breeding stock) not included under the price trigger category that were grown for food, fiber, fur, or feathers. Payment calculations will use a sales-based approach, where producers are paid based on five payment gradations associated with their 2019 sales.

Additional commodities are eligible in CFAP 2 that weren't eligible in the first iteration of the program. If your agricultural operation has been impacted by the pandemic since April 2020, we encourage you to apply for CFAP 2. A complete list of eligible commodities, payment rates and calculations can be found on farmers.gov/cfap.

Eligibility There is a payment limitation of \$250,000 per person or entity for all commodities combined. Applicants who are corporations, limited liability companies, limited partnerships may qualify for additional payment limits when members actively provide personal labor or personal management for the farming operation. In addition, this special payment limitation provision has been expanded to include trusts and estates for both CFAP 1 and 2.

Producers will also have to certify they meet the Adjusted Gross Income limitation of \$900,000 unless at least 75 percent or more of their income is derived from farming, ranching or forestry-related activities. Producers must also be in compliance with Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation provisions.

Applying for Assistance Producers can apply for assistance beginning Sept. 21, 2020. Applications will be accepted through Dec. 11, 2020.

Additional information and application forms can be found at farmers.gov/cfap. Documentation to support the producer's application and certification may be requested. All other eligibility forms, such as those related to adjusted gross income and payment information, can be downloaded from farmers.gov/cfap/apply. For existing FSA customers, including those who participated in CFAP 1, many documents are likely already on file. Producers should check with FSA county office to see if any of the forms need to be updated.

Customers seeking one-on-one support with the CFAP 2 application process can call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance. This is a recommended first step before a producer engages with the team at the FSA county office.

All USDA Service Centers are open for business, including some that are open to visitors to conduct business in person by appointment only. 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 be in the office, and they will be working with our producers in the office, by phone and using online tools. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

Niobrara County Producers May be Eligible for Emergency Conservation Program

A drought has caused severe damage to natural water sources in Niobrara County.

If you've suffered severe damage, you may be eligible for assistance under the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) administered by the Niobrara County Farm Service Agency (FSA)

For land to be eligible, the natural disaster must create new conservation problems that, if untreated, would:

- be so costly to rehabilitate that Federal assistance is or will be needed to return the land to productive agricultural use
- is unusual and is not the type that would recur frequently in the same area
- affect the productive capacity of the farmland
- impair or endanger the land

If you qualify for ECP assistance, you may receive cost-share levels not to exceed 75 percent of the eligible cost of restoration measures. Eligible socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers and ranchers can receive up to 90 percent of the eligible cost of restoration. No one is eligible for more than \$500,000 cost sharing per natural disaster occurrence.

If you've suffered a loss from a natural disaster may contact the local FSA County Office and request assistance from October 1, 2020 to November 30, 2020.

To be eligible for assistance, practices must not be started until all of the following are met:

- an application for cost-share assistance has been filed
- the local FSA County Committee (COC) or its representative has conducted an onsite inspection of the damaged area
- the Agency responsible for technical assistance, such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), has made a needs determination, which may include cubic yards of earthmoving, etc., required for rehabilitation

For more information about ECP, contact your Niobrara County USDA Service Center at 307-334-2953 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Attention all Buyers of Agricultural Products

It is required that buyers of agricultural products check or register with the Secretary of State's Office to determine if there are liens against the Seller of the product. If a lien is found you are required to place the lien holders name on the check as well as that of the Seller. Ag Products include but are not limited to: livestock (including horses), crops used for feed (hay, silage, oats, etc.), machinery, equipment and all other crops. **Failure to place the lien holder's name on the check may result in civil legal action being taken against the Buyer of the product. Protect yourself as a Buyer!** You may contact the Secretary of State's Office at 1-307-777-7311.

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting should contact Laura Kessler at 307-334-2953 Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

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).