



NEWSLETTER



April 2020

Platte County

Farm Service Agency:

1502 Progress Ct
Wheatland, WY 82201

Phone: 307-322-4050 x 2

Fax: 855-415-3444

Office Hours:

8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Monday-Friday

County Executive Director:

Pam Metz

Program Technicians:

Vacant

Farm Loan Manager:

Dixie Mount

Farm Loan Analyst:

Heidi Platt

County Committee:

Amy Miller, Chairperson
Del Tinsley, Vice-Chairperson
Chuck Maike II, Member

Next Committee Meeting:

TBD

Do you get our monthly emails? You can stay up to date with all of the latest FSA program information by signing up for GovDelivery. Call our office and we will help you get signed up!

Platte County News

A lot has been happening in the office. You may have stopped by and noticed that our doors are locked. We are still here and still working to help the farmers and ranchers of Platte County, we are just finding new ways to do it. Our interactions with producers are limited to phone, email and mail. If you need to contact us, here are our email addresses in addition to mailing address and phone number on the left side bar of this newsletter:

- ◇ Pam Metz, CED - pamela.metz@usda.gov
- ◇ Dixie Mount, FLM - dixie.mount@usda.gov
- ◇ Heidi Platt, Farm Loan Analyst - heidi.platt@usda.gov

- There are some staffing changes in the office. Kayla Mantle accepted a position in the private sector in February. Mitzi Mudgett retired in March after 33 years of service. Heidi Platt has moved to Farm Loan as of April 26th. Thus, we will be welcoming 3 new Program Technicians in May, 1 in Farm Loan Programs and 2 in Farm Programs.
- Upcoming dates to remember:
 - * May 15 - deadline to offer land in CRP Grasslands
 - * May 31 - last day to request Marketing Assistance Loan on 2019 corn
 - * June 30 - final day to enroll farms in 2020 ARC/PLC program
 - * July 15 - acreage reporting deadline for 2020 crops
- Acreage reporting may be affected by our new operational status. We want to make it as easy as possible for producers. Please contact the office and let us know which of the following 3 options will work best for you:
 - ◇ Mail maps to producer; producer will mark planted acres and mail back to office
 - ◇ Email maps to producer; producer will mark planted acres and send back to office.
 - ◇ Producer report acres by farm/field with crop insurance and asks agent to send crop report to FSA office.

ARC/PLC Acreage Maintenance

Producers enrolled in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs must protect all cropland and noncropland acres on the farm from wind and water erosion and noxious weeds. Producers who sign ARC county or individual contracts and PLC contracts agree to effectively control noxious weeds on the farm according to sound agricultural practices. If a producer fails to take necessary actions to correct a maintenance problem on a farm that is enrolled in ARC or PLC, the County Committee may elect to terminate the contract for the program year.

Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Enrollment for 2020

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages agricultural producers to enroll now in the Agriculture Risk Loss (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs. The deadline to enroll for the 2020 crop year is June 30, 2020. By enrolling soon, producers can beat the rush as the deadline nears.

FSA offices have multiple programs competing for the time and attention of our staff. Because of the importance and complexities of the ARC and PLC programs; and to ensure FSA meets your program delivery expectations, please do not wait to start the enrollment process. Contact your FSA county office and make an appointment soon to ensure your elections are made and contracts signed well ahead of the deadline.

ARC and PLC provide financial protections to farmers from substantial drops in crop prices or revenues and are vital economic safety nets for most American farms.

The programs cover the following commodities: barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium and short grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

Farm owners have a one-time opportunity to update PLC payment yields that take effect beginning with crop year 2020. If the owner accompanies the producer to the office, the yield update and enrollments may be completed during the same office visit.

More Information

For more information on ARC and PLC, download our program fact sheet or our 2014-2018 farm bills comparison fact sheet. Online ARC and PLC election decision tools are available at www.fsa.usda.gov/arc/plc. To enroll, contact your FSA county office for an appointment.

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, phones numbers or addresses
- ◇ Shares or membership changes to entities
- ◇ Deeding land into a trust, sold or purchased property
- ◇ Added or dropped leased land

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 farmers 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 application, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

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. To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-locator.

Wool Triggers Loan Deficiency Payment in Platte County

Wool producers in Platte County may be eligible for loan deficiency payments (LDPs) from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA), which help producers under certain market conditions. LDPs trigger when the market price for a commodity falls below our set loan rate for that commodity.

Loan deficiency payments are available to wool producers beginning at shearing up until the producer loses beneficial interest in the wool (that is they no longer have title, possession or control of the wool). For most wool producers, beneficial interest is lost at shearing. Wool LDPs also apply to unshorn lambs sold for immediate slaughter.

To be eligible to request an LDP, a producer must first sign the 633-EZ page 1. This must be signed PRIOR to losing beneficial interest in the commodity each calendar year. Once you deliver your wool to market or have a weight, we can complete your LDP application for payment. We will need information on your sheep herd (# of ewes/rams, breed, any unshorn lambs sold).

The current LDP is \$.02/pound for ungraded wool and graded wool over 26 microns is \$0.25-0.30/pound this week. Wool graded under 18.6 microns has an LDP rate of \$0.20/pound. Market prices change weekly so LDP rates have the potential to change weekly.

Updating Bank Accounts

FSA program payments are issued electronically into your bank account. In order to make timely payments, you need to notify your FSA servicing office if you close your account or if your bank information is changed for whatever reason. Payments can be delayed if FSA is not notified of changes to account and bank routing numbers.

If you have a loan with FSA and also participate in other FSA programs you will need to make sure to update your bank account information with the Farm Loan staff as well as the Farm Program staff. Due to the systems that are used by our programs, banking information is loaded into 2 different systems and filed in 2 different places.

NRCS also uses a completely different system for their payments so updating with them but not us will hold up any payments needing to be made to you.

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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 in to 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 www.farmers.gov/service-center-locator and more information about Coronavirus and USDA Service Centers at www.farmers.gov/coronavirus.

CARES Act

At this time FSA does not have specific information on the CARES Act or how it will be administered by our offices. We are keeping track of producers who inquire and will make it known publicly how to apply for the program once we have details. Look for information in your newspaper, on the local radio or in our monthly GovDelivery email.

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).