



# NEWSLETTER



**MAY 2020**

**Sheridan ~ Johnson County  
FSA Office**

1949 Sugarland Drive, Ste 126  
Sheridan, WY 82801

**(307) 672-5820 Ext. 2**

**(307) 683-4202**

**Fax: 866-574-1670**

**Toll Free Number:**

**1-866-262-4396**

**Johnson County Office Day:**

First **Wednesday** of each  
month.

Buffalo USDA Service Center

500 Lott St., Unit A

Buffalo, WY 82834

(307) 684-2526 Ext. 3

**FSA Office Personnel:**

Linda Benzel, CED

Staci L. Steiner, PT

Justine Scheeler, PT

**County Committee Members:**

Raymon Turk, Chairman

John Buyok, Vice Chairman

Thad Stoltz, Regular Member

Ray Daly, Regular Member

Gerry Miller, Regular Member

Susan Moyes, SD Advisor

**Farm Loan Manager:**

Rob Weppner

307-682-8843 ext. 2

rob.weppner@usda.gov

**Dates to Remember:**

**May 25 – Memorial Day Office**

**CLOSED**

**June 30 – ARC/PLC 2020 Signup**

**Deadline**

**July 15 – 2020 Spring Crop**

**Acreage Report Deadline**

**Next COC Meeting:**

TBD



## A Minute With Linda...

Hello Producers~

I hope this newsletter finds you and your family doing well.

We are committed to providing you with information and assisting with program delivery. Staci, Justine and I are teleworking and rotating one person in the office. We are available through email, phone or fax. Our emails are:

[Linda.benzel@usda.gov](mailto:Linda.benzel@usda.gov)

[Staci.steiner@usda.gov](mailto:Staci.steiner@usda.gov)

[Justine.scheeler@usda.gov](mailto:Justine.scheeler@usda.gov)

We continue to post important sign-ups and deadline dates in the monthly emailed bulletins sent via **GovDelivery**. In addition, we mail quarterly newsletters. If you are not receiving the emailed bulletin, please contact our office to register your email.

Below are two helpful websites to keep you updated on USDA's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Federal Resource Guide.

<https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus>

[https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/USDA\\_COVID-19\\_Fed\\_Rural\\_Resource\\_Guide.pdf](https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/USDA_COVID-19_Fed_Rural_Resource_Guide.pdf)

Best Regards,

Linda Benzel, CED

## MAL and LDP Policy

The 2018 Farm Bill extends loan authority through 2023 for Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs).

MALs and LDPs provide financing and marketing assistance for wheat, feed grains, soybeans, and other oilseeds, pulse crops, rice, peanuts, cotton, wool and honey. MALs provide producers interim financing after harvest to help them meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are typically at harvest-time lows. A producer who is eligible to obtain a loan, but agrees to forgo the loan, may obtain an LDP if such a payment is available.

FSA is now accepting requests for 2019 MALs and LDPs for all eligible commodities after harvest. Requests for loans and LDPs shall be made on or before the final availability date for the respective commodities.

To be considered eligible for an LDP, producers must have form [CCC-633EZ](#), Page 1 on file at their local FSA Office before losing beneficial interest in the crop. Pages 2, 3 or 4 of the form must be submitted when payment is requested.

For more information and additional eligibility requirements, please contact your USDA Service Center or FSA's website [fsa.usda.gov](http://fsa.usda.gov)

## Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands Signup

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands is part of the Conservation Reserve Program, a federally funded voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so that environmentally sensitive agricultural land is protected and used for conservation benefits.

With CRP Grasslands, landowners and operators can protect grassland, including rangeland and pastureland, and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as grazing lands. The program emphasizes support for grazing operations, plant and animal biodiversity and grassland and land containing shrubs and forbs under the greatest threat of conversion. Participants receive annual payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is either 10 or 15 years.

Protecting grasslands contributes positively to the economy of many regions, provides biodiversity of plant and animal populations and improves environmental quality.

Participants retain the right to conduct common grazing practices, produce hay, mow or harvest for seed production (subject to certain restrictions during the nesting season of bird species that are in significant decline or those that are protected under federal or state law), conduct fire rehabilitation and construct firebreaks and fences.

**Interested participants may submit an offer with the USDA FSA from March 16 to May 15, 2020.** These offers will be reviewed to determine which offers can be approved using applicable CRP Grasslands Ranking Factors. FSA collects data for each of the ranking factors based on the relative benefits for the land offered. Each eligible offer is ranked in comparison to all other eligible offers and selections for acceptance are made from that ranking.

Land currently must be planted to a grass cover.

In return for following an approved CRP conservation plan, FSA provides annual rental payments to participants based on 75 percent of the NASS estimated pastureland rental rate as determined by FSA for the life of the agreement.

To find more information about CRP Grasslands, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/crp](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp). To locate the nearest FSA office or USDA service center, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

## Sheridan~Johnson County is Eligible for Emergency Loans

Sheridan~Johnson County was declared a primary disaster due to flooding using the streamlined Secretarial Disaster Designation process; Secretarial Disaster Designation S4527. {Deadline to apply for this is 5/6/2020}

Under this designation, producers with operations in any primary or contiguous county are eligible to apply for low interest emergency loans.

Emergency loans help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding and other natural disasters or quarantine. Emergency loan funds may be used to:

- Restore or replace essential property;
- Pay all or part of production costs associated with the disaster year;
- Pay essential family living expenses;
- Reorganize the farming operation; and
- Refinance certain debts.

Producers have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for emergency loan assistance. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. Producers can borrow up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses, to a maximum amount of \$500,000.

For more information about emergency loans, please contact your local FSA office or visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov). Sheridan and Johnson County producers please contact Rob Weppner at (307) 682-8843 extension 2 or email him at [rob.weppner@usda.gov](mailto:rob.weppner@usda.gov)

## Crop Acreage Reporting: What you need to know

As a farmer or rancher, you should file acreage reports with USDA. It is an important part of determining your eligibility for key programs, including price support, disaster relief and conservation programs. A crop acreage report documents all crops and their intended uses and is an important part of record-keeping for your farm or ranch. This report is needed to access many USDA assistance programs.

Acreage reporting establishes your eligibility for many programs including disaster programs. Even if there is no program payment that might be at issue when an acreage report could be filed or filed late with a fee, it is always better to file an acreage report and remit the late-file fee than to choose not to report the acreage. *Sometimes program or payment eligibility decisions or application deadlines extend beyond the final date when a late-filed acreage report can even be filed.* So, electing not to file and pay a fee could be final with regard to the potential eligibility of those acres and producers sharing in the acres.

**Having an acreage report on file helps ensure eligibility for payments and disaster assistance; especially unforeseen future disasters or program payment eligibility.**

Some crops have multiple plantings and each planting must be reported. Some crops are eligible for continuous certification. This means after a crop is reported once, the certification remains in effect until a change is made or the Conservation Reserve Program contract has expired. To see if your crops are eligible for continuous certification check with your local office. Farmers and ranchers must complete the crop acreage report with FSA even if you've already submitted a report to your crop insurance agency.

To schedule your appointment for 2020 Spring Crop Acreage Reporting, please call the Sheridan~Johnson County FSA office at (307) 683-4202. **DEADLINE IS WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2020**

## *Rural Energy for America Program (REAP)*

REAP provides assistance to agricultural producers and rural small business for renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvements through Federal loan guarantees and grants. Funds may be used to purchase, install, and construct:

\*Renewable energy systems, including: Wind; Solar, Biomass, including anaerobic digesters; Geothermal; and more.

\*Energy efficiency projects, including: Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems; Insulation; Lighting; Cooling or refrigeration units; Controls and equipment; Doors, windows, and other building improvements; and more.

Grants can finance up to 25% of the project cost, and loans or loan and grant combinations can finance up to 75% of the project cost.

## *Value Added Producer Grants*

Get more revenue from your raw agricultural products by processing or marketing them

Funds can be used for planning activities or for working capital expenses related to producing and marketing a value-added agricultural product.

This assistance is available to: Independent producers; Agricultural producer groups; Farmer or Rancher cooperatives; and Majority-controlled producer-based business.

Participants must obtain matching funds for half the total costs of their project.

### **For More Information**

Information on all **USDA Rural Development** programs is available online or from the Sheridan County USDA Service Center, located in Sheridan, Wyoming. Visit: [www.rd.usda.gov/wy](http://www.rd.usda.gov/wy) or contact Jessica Taylor, Area Specialist at (307) 683-4188, [jessica.taylor@usda.gov](mailto:jessica.taylor@usda.gov)

USDA Farm Service Agency  
Sheridan ~ Johnson Counties Office  
1949 Sugarland Drive, Suite 126  
Sheridan, WY 82801-5720

### Important FSA Dates and Deadlines

- ◆ **May 25, 2020** – Memorial Day – Office CLOSED
- ◆ **June 30, 2020** – 2020 ARC/PLC Signup Deadline
- ◆ **July 3, 2020** – July 4<sup>th</sup> Holiday Observed – Office CLOSED
- ◆ **July 15, 2020** – Spring Crop Acreage Reporting Deadline



The Sheridan FSA Office is open Monday through Friday from 8am to 4:30pm, closed from noon to 1pm

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting should contact Linda Benzel at 307-683-4202 or 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).