

**JUNE 2020**



**Farm Service Agency Electronic News Service**

# BULLETIN

**GovDelivery**

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## Sheridan~Johnson County FSA Updates

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### Sheridan~Johnson County FSA Office **From the Desk of Linda Benzel, CED**

1949 Sugarland Drive, Ste. 126  
Sheridan, WY 82801

Phone: 307-683-4202  
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**County Executive Director:**  
Linda Benzel

**Farm Loan Manager:**  
Rob Weppner  
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(307) 682-8843 ext 2

**Program Technicians:**  
Justine Scheeler  
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**County Committee:**  
Raymon Turk, Chairman  
John Buyok, Vice Chairman  
Ray Daly, Member  
Gerry Miller, Member  
Thad Stoltz, Member

Hello Producers,

The drought conditions continue to get worse for both counties, and for much of the western region of the United States. The grasshopper infestation and recent wildfires have also exacerbated the damage to the rangeland. Please be mindful of calling or emailing our office to report a loss within 15 days of when the drought/fire damage is apparent.

Please refer to the article below regarding the current sign-up for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP). The program deadline is August 28, 2020.

The Sheridan County USDA Service Center has been moved to Phase/Stage 2 of the re-opening protocol. This means that the office door will remain locked, but visitors/producers can be admitted into the space by appointment only. Please give us a call to schedule an appointment and answer a few screening questions.

We continue to utilize the phone, email and fax for the sign-up process and crop reporting.

Farm Service Agency: (307) 672-5820 extension 2

Natural Resources Conservation Service: (307) 672-5820 extension 3

**Next County Committee Meeting: TBD**

Employees may also be contacted by email at the following email address:

[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 have started the 2020 crop reporting via email and mail. For those of you who do not plant crops in the spring, please contact our office to start the process of reporting your acreage. Those who are planting, please let us know when you are finished, and we will work with you to update the crop report. Deadline is July 15, 2020.

Best Regards,

Linda

<https://www.usda.gov/tellsonny> Tell Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Purdue about your experience with FSA or NRCS.~

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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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## **FSA Offers Joint Financing Option on Direct Farm Ownership Loans**

The USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) [Direct Farm Ownership loans](#) are a resource to help farmers and ranchers become owner-operators of family farms, improve and expand current operations, increase agricultural productivity, and assist with land tenure to save farmland for future generations.

Depending on the applicant's needs, there are three types of Direct Farm Ownership Loans: regular, down payment and joint financing. FSA also offers a [Direct Farm Ownership Microloan](#) option for smaller financial needs up to \$50,000.

Joint financing allows FSA to provide more farmers and ranchers with access to capital. FSA lends up to 50 percent of the total amount financed. A commercial lender, a State program or the seller of the property being purchased, provides the balance of loan funds, with or without an FSA guarantee. The maximum loan amount for a Joint Financing loan is \$600,000 and the repayment period for the loan is up to 40 years.

To be eligible, the operation must be an eligible farm enterprise. Farm Ownership loan funds cannot be used to finance nonfarm enterprises and all applicants must be able to meet general eligibility requirements. Loan applicants are also required to have participated in the business operations of a farm or ranch for at least three years out of the 10 years prior to the date the application is submitted. The applicant must show documentation that their participation in the business operation of the farm or ranch was not solely as a laborer.

For more information about FSA Loan programs, contact your local FSA office or contact Rob Weppner, Farm Loan Manager at 307-682-8843 extension 2 or by email at [rob.weppner@usda.gov](mailto:rob.weppner@usda.gov).

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Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting should contact [Linda Benzel](#) at [307-672-5820](tel:307-672-5820) 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).