

April 2020



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# BULLETIN

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## Weston County FSA Updates

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**Weston County FSA Office**  
1225 Washington Blvd, Ste. 2  
Newcastle, WY 82701  
Phone: 307-746-2701, ext. 2  
Fax: 307-746-2870 or  
855-415-3437

**County Executive Director:**  
Peggy Livingston, ext. 101

**Farm Loan Manager:**  
Rob Weppner, 307-682-8843

**Program Technician:**  
Sherie Hilgenkamp, ext. 100

**County Committee:**  
Chuck Grieves, Chairman  
Randy Oleson, Vice Chairman  
Harry Tavegia, Member  
Robin Riesland, Minority Advisor

**Next County Committee Meeting:**  
May 20, 2020 at 1PM

### 2020 Acreage Reporting – A Message from the Weston County FSA Office

Timely and accurate acreage reports for all crops and land uses, including prevented planting or failed acreage, are the foundation for many FSA program benefits, including disaster programs for livestock owners. Failure to file an acreage report by the crop acreage reporting deadline may result in ineligibility for future program benefits. All producers are encouraged to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline as listed below.

As the Weston County FSA Office will continue in the foreseeable future to be open for business by phone appointment only, we are planning on sending maps to our producers for acreage reporting purposes starting in May 2020. If you wish to receive your maps by e-mail, please call our office or email Sherie Hilgenkamp at [sherie.hilgenkamp@usda.gov](mailto:sherie.hilgenkamp@usda.gov) or Peggy Livingston at [peggy.livingston@usda.gov](mailto:peggy.livingston@usda.gov).

#### Weston County Acreage Reporting Deadlines:

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for Weston County:

July 15, 2020 - Spring-planted feed grains, perennial forage, CRP & other crops

November 15, 2020 - Apiculture (bees), fall-seeded small grains

FSA will not accept acreage reports provided more than a year after the acreage reporting deadline.

**Changing a Crop's Intended Use, such as grain to hay, hay to grazing, or grazing to hay:**

Conditions may have changed since you planted and certified the intended use of your crop. Plans may have changed due to lack of precipitation, heat and high winds, lack of irrigation water or because of storm damages such as hail.

If your plans have changed and you're going to graze instead of hay your crop or cut for hay or silage instead of harvesting for grain, then you must report the change of intended use to our office. Failure to timely report your decision to change the use of crops can result in the loss of Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) benefits. Producers can report the change in intended use of a crop up until the final acreage reporting deadline, July 15, 2020.

When grass fails to meet your pasture needs, you may consider grazing hay fields rather than harvesting third or fourth cuttings. Changing the use to grazing may require producers to meet with the FSA appraiser and establish representative samples for a fall appraisal

Crops with NAP coverage that will not be harvested must be inspected by an FSA Loss Adjuster in order to maintain NAP eligibility. Destruction of the crop, such as through grazing, or allowing deterioration of the crop without an inspection can result in the loss of program eligibility.

All producers considering a change of intended use, destruction of the crop prior to the end of the crop year, or those who may be unsure of their certification should contact our office. Failure to timely report these changes can affect your NAP yields or result in the loss of NAP or other program benefits.

**Reporting Cover Crops:**

The intended use of cover only will be used to report cover crops. FSA policy change allows cover crops to be hayed and grazed; however, the crop purpose must be for conservation purposes, not production crop, and must be terminated according to NRCS cover crop termination guidelines. Program eligibility for the cover crop that is being hayed or grazed will be determined by each specific program.

Cover crops include grasses, legumes, and forbs, for seasonal cover and other conservation purposes. Cover crops are primarily used for erosion control, soil health improvement, and water quality improvement. The cover crop may be terminated by natural causes, such as frost, or intentionally terminated through chemical application, crimping, rolling, tillage or cutting. A cover crop managed and terminated according to NRCS Cover Crop Termination Guidelines is **not** considered a crop for crop insurance purposes.

If the cover crop is harvested for any use other than forage or grazing and is not terminated according to policy guidelines, then that crop will no longer be considered a cover crop and the acreage report must be revised to reflect the actual crop.

Cover crops can be planted: with no subsequent crop planted, before a subsequent crop, after prevented planting acreage, after a planted crop, or into a standing crop.

**Permitted Revision of Intended use After Acreage Reporting Date:**

If a producer acquires additional acreage—a new land lease, or control or ownership changes—after the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported **no later than 30 calendars days** after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.

### **File a Notice of Loss for Failed Acres and Prevented Planting:**

Producers should report crop acreage they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were prevented from planting. 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 Risk Management Agency (RMA).

Additionally, producers with failed acres should also use form *CCC-576, Notice of Loss*, to report failed acres.

For losses on crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), producers must file a *Notice of Loss* within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent. Producers must timely file a *Notice of Loss* for failed acres on all crops including grasses.

Other information may be required for filing a notice for failed acres and prevented planting, so be sure to contact our office if you should find yourself in this situation.

### **Late Planting**

If the crop has not been planted by the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.

### **Special Note for NAP Participants**

Non-insured 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.

For questions regarding crop certification, crop loss reports, or questions about a crop you are intending to plant, please contact our office at 307-746-2701 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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## **USDA Offers Individuals Options to Complete Business Online**

Farmers, ranchers and agricultural producers have online options to access U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs, including Farm Service Agency’s Agriculture Risk Coverage/Price Loss Coverage (ARC/PLC), Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs), producer farm data, such as Common Land Unit data through FSAfarm+, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service’s [Conservation Client Gateway](#) .

Producers doing business as an individual with these agencies first need to sign up for the Level 2 eAuthentication access. Currently USDA eAuthentication does not have the mechanism to issue accounts to businesses, corporations, other entities or for anyone acting on behalf of another individual or entity.

Users with a secure Level 2 eAuthentication ID linked to their USDA customer record can apply for select USDA programs, view and print farm maps and farm records data. Enrolling is easy!

1. Contact your local service center to confirm you have a USDA customer record with a primary email address. Use our [Service Center Locator](#) to find your local office.

2. Navigate to the [eAuth Account Registration page](#).
3. Select "Customer" on the registration page.
4. Enter your primary email address, which should match what USDA has on your customer record. You will receive an email from eAuth asking you to confirm your email address. Click the "Continue Registration" link in this email to continue the registration process. *Note: When you log in, your User ID will be your email address.*
5. Next, enter your name and set a password.
6. Finally, you will need to verify your identity. You will be taken to a page where you will need to provide information such as your date of birth and residential address, and then can verify your identity online. If you are unable to verify your identity online, contact your local USDA Service Center.

Visit [farmers.gov/sign-in](https://farmers.gov/sign-in) to learn more. To locate a Service Center near you or use online services not requiring eAuthentication access, visit [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov). For technical assistance, call the eAuthentication help desk at 1-800-457-3642.

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## Dates to Remember

May 25, 2020	Weston County FSA Office is closed for Memorial Day
June 30, 2020	Enrollment deadline for <b>2020 Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs (ARC/PLC)</b>
July 4, 2020	Weston County FSA Office is closed for Independence Day.
July 15, 2020	<b>Acreage (Crop) Reporting</b> deadline for Spring Planted Crops and Perennial Forage

- **NAP Notice of Loss for Crops** must be filed the earlier of 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent, or 15 days of the final harvest date.
- **LIP Notice of Loss for Livestock Losses** must be filed within 30 calendar days of when the loss is first apparent.
- **Leases and/or Land Ownership including operational changes** must be reported within 30 calendar days of change to avoid late fees, repayment of funds issued and/or ineligibility for program participation

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact Peggy Livingston at 307-746-2701 extension 2 or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

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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).