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Farm Service Agency Electronic News Service

BULLETIN

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Big Horn County FSA Updates

Big Horn County Farm Service Agency

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Office Notes

Happy Spring!!

Big Horn County is now open to limited visitors by appointment only. Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff also continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. To make an in-person appointment call (307)765-2689, or knock on the door and we will let you in.

You may have noticed a deposit from us in the past few weeks. This is due to the additional Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) assistance. These payments were based off the previous CFAP program information, so no additional information was required. If you have any questions or concerns about this process, please feel free to contact our office.

It is planting season and we just want to remind everyone that it is important to record your planting dates for each crop and when you are done to come report your acreage to our office. The deadline for this is July 15, but we encourage you to complete your reporting once planting is completed.
Big Horn County is eligible for the Livestock Forage Program (LFP) for the grazing due to the drought. We are currently updating all of our grazing records from acres to AUM’s so we have decided to complete the signups during acreage reporting this year. This will allow us to review your new grazing acreage reports with the AUM’s prior to completing the LFP applications. Plan on completing both during crop reporting this year.

Have a safe planting season and we look forward to seeing all of you during your acreage reporting.

After Identifying Gaps in Previous Aid, USDA Announces ‘Pandemic Assistance for Producers’ to Distribute Resources More Equitably

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that USDA is establishing new programs and efforts to bring financial assistance to farmers, ranchers and producers who felt the impact of COVID-19 market disruptions. The new initiative—USDA Pandemic Assistance for Producers—will reach a broader set of producers than in previous COVID-19 aid programs.

USDA is dedicating at least $6 billion toward the new programs. The Department will also develop rules for new programs that will put a greater emphasis on outreach to small and socially disadvantaged producers, specialty crop and organic producers, timber harvesters, as well as provide support for the food supply chain and producers of renewable fuel, among others. Existing programs like the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) will fall within the new initiative and, where statutory authority allows, will be refined to better address the needs of producers.

USDA Pandemic Assistance for Producers was needed, said Vilsack, after a review of previous COVID-19 assistance programs targeting farmers identified a number of gaps and disparities in how assistance was distributed as well as inadequate outreach to underserved producers and smaller and medium operations.

USDA will reopen sign-up for CFAP 2 for at least 60 days beginning on April 5, 2021. The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) has committed at least $2.5 million to improve outreach for CFAP 2 and will establish partnerships with organizations with strong connections to socially disadvantaged communities to ensure they are informed and aware of the application process.

USDA Pandemic Assistance for Producers – 4 Parts

Part 1: Investing $6 Billion to Expand Help & Assistance to More Producers

USDA will dedicate at least $6 billion to develop a number of new programs or modify existing proposals using discretionary funding from the Consolidated Appropriations Act and other coronavirus funding that went unspent by the previous administration.

Part 2: Adding $500 Million of New Funding to Existing Programs
USDA expects to begin investing approximately $500 million in expedited assistance through several existing programs this spring, with most by April 30.

Part 3: Carrying Out Formula Payments under CFAP 1, CFAP 2, CFAP AA

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, enacted December 2020 requires FSA to make certain payments to producers according to a mandated formula. USDA is now expediting these provisions because there is no discretion involved in interpreting such directives, they are self-enacting.

- An increase in CFAP 1 payment rates for cattle. Cattle producers with approved CFAP 1 applications will automatically receive these payments beginning in April. Information on the additional payment rates for cattle can be found on farmers.gov/cfap. Eligible producers do not need to submit new applications, since payments are based on previously approved CFAP 1 application. USDA estimates additional payments of more than $1.1 billion to more than 410,000 producers, according to the mandated formula.
- Additional CFAP assistance of $20 per acre for producers of eligible crops identified as CFAP 2 flat-rate or price-trigger crops beginning in April. This includes alfalfa, corn, cotton, hemp, peanuts, rice, sorghum, soybeans, sugar beets and wheat, among other crops. FSA will automatically issue payments to eligible price trigger and flat-rate crop producers based on the eligible acres included on their CFAP 2 applications. Eligible producers do not need to submit a new CFAP 2 application. For a list of all eligible row-crops, visit farmers.gov/cfap. USDA estimates additional payments of more than $4.5 billion to more than 560,000 producers, according to the mandated formula.
- USDA will finalize routine decisions and minor formula adjustments on applications and begin processing payments for certain applications filed as part of the CFAP Additional Assistance program in the following categories:
  o Applications filed for pullets and turfgrass sod;
  o A formula correction for row-crop producer applications to allow producers with a non-Actual Production History (APH) insurance policy to use 100% of the 2019 Agriculture Risk Coverage-County Option (ARC-CO) benchmark yield in the calculation;
  o Sales commodity applications revised to include insurance indemnities, Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program payments, and Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus payments, as required by statute; and
  o Additional payments for swine producers and contract growers under CFAP Additional Assistance remain on hold and are likely to require modifications to the regulation as part of the broader evaluation and future assistance; however, FSA will continue to accept applications from interested producers.

Part 4: Reopening CFAP 2 Sign-Up to Improve Access & Outreach to Underserved Producers

As noted above, USDA will re-open sign-up for of CFAP 2 for at least 60 days beginning on April 5, 2021.

- FSA has committed at least $2.5 million to establish partnerships and direct outreach efforts intended to improve outreach for CFAP 2 and will cooperate with grassroots organizations with strong connections to socially disadvantaged communities to ensure they are informed and aware of the application process.

Please visit www.farmers.gov for additional information and announcements under the USDA Pandemic Assistance to Producers initiative, which will help to expand and more equitably
distribute financial assistance to producers and farming operations during the COVID-19 national emergency.

### Applying for FSA Direct and Guaranteed Loans

FSA offers **direct** farm ownership and direct farm operating loans to producers who want to establish, maintain, or strengthen their farm or ranch. Direct loans are processed, approved and serviced by FSA loan officers.

Direct farm operating loans can be used to purchase livestock and feed, farm equipment, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance, and other costs including family living expenses. Operating loans can also be used to finance minor improvements or repairs to buildings and to refinance some farm-related debts, excluding real estate.

Direct farm ownership loans can be used to purchase farmland, enlarge an existing farm, construct and repair buildings, and to make farm improvements.

The maximum loan amount for direct farm ownership loans is $600,000 and the maximum loan amount for direct operating loans is $400,000 and a down payment is not required. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the producer's ability to repay the loan. Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years.

Please contact your local FSA office for more information or to apply for a direct farm ownership or operating loan.

**FSA guaranteed loans** allow lenders to provide agricultural credit to farmers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria. Farmers and ranchers apply for a guaranteed loan through a lender, and the lender arranges for the guarantee. FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. Guaranteed loans can be used for both farm ownership and operating purposes.

Guaranteed farm ownership loans can be used to purchase farmland, construct or repair buildings, develop farmland to promote soil and water conservation or to refinance debt.

Guaranteed operating loans can be used to purchase livestock, farm equipment, feed, seed, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance and other operating expenses.

FSA can guarantee farm ownership and operating loans up to $1,776,000. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the producer's ability to repay the loan. Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years.

For more information on guaranteed loans, contact your Washakie County USDA Service Center at (307)347-2456 Ext 2 if you are on the South end of the county and Park County USDA Service Center at (307)754-9411 Ext. 2 if you are on the North end of the county, or visit [fsa.usda.gov](http://fsa.usda.gov).

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting should contact Brenda Miller at 307-765-2689 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).