From Brenda's Desk

Hope this finds all of you having a good summer. It is that time of year for your annual acreage reporting, deadlines for reporting is **July 15, 2021**. We are traveling to the Lovell NRCS office by appointment to complete this reporting with the North End producers. If you haven't made an appointment with us, please call so we can get these completed. During this reporting we are also trying to complete the 2021 Livestock Forage Program signup. We ask that you bring your livestock numbers with you or call ahead with your numbers so we can have your application completed and ready for review and signing during your acreage reporting.

We have the Emergency Livestock Assistance Program that assists with the additional cost of hauling water to livestock during a drought situation. Big Horn County has hit D3 status on the drought monitor early in the year and is available for water hauling assistance. Currently we are only rated at D1. If you feel that your area of the county is drier than the monitor is showing you can go into this website [https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?WY](https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?WY) and scroll to the bottom of the site and submit a report of your current conditions. This will be very beneficial to the county for program availability if you report your conditions through this site. Many of the areas of the county do not get an accurate picture of the current conditions without our producers help.

We are also accepting nominations for the county committee for Local Administrative Area 3 which covers all land east of the Big Horn River south of sheep mountain and excluding all land south of Manderson to the Washakie county line. This includes the communities of Shell and Hyattville, currently Martin Mercer represents this area. If you would like to be a member of the county committee or know of a neighbor that would be a good representative for this area on our committee, please contact our office to complete a nomination form.

Have a great summer and know that we are here to serve your agricultural needs.

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**ELAP Covers Losses from Additional Cost of Transporting Water to Livestock**

If you've incurred additional operating costs for transporting water to livestock due to an eligible drought, assistance may be available to you through the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP).

An eligible drought means that part or all of your county is designated D3 (extreme drought) or higher as indicated by the [U.S. Drought Monitor](https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?WY).

Eligible livestock must be adult or non-adult dairy cattle, beef cattle, buffalo, and beefalo, as well as equine, goats, or sheep. Additionally, the livestock must have been owned 60
calendar days prior to the beginning of the drought and be physically located in the county designated as a disaster area due to drought. Adequate livestock watering systems or facilities must have existed before the drought occurred and producers are only eligible if they do not normally transport water to the livestock.

Livestock that were or would have been in a feedlot are not eligible for transporting water. ELAP covers the additional cost of transporting water and does not cover the cost of the water itself.

You must file a notice of loss on form CCC-851 the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent to you or by Jan. 31, 2022. Additionally, the deadline to submit an application for payment for 2020 ELAP assistance is Jan. 31, 2022.

You’ll have to provide documentation to FSA that shows the method used to transport the water, the number of gallons of water transported and the number of eligible livestock to which water was transported.

To make an appointment to sign up for ELAP and to learn more about eligibility, application and documentation requirements, contact your Big Horn County USDA Service Center at (307)765-2689 Ext 2 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

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**USDA Reminds Producers to File Crop Acreage Reports**

Agricultural producers who have not yet completed their crop acreage reports after spring planting should make an appointment with the Big Horn County Farm Service Agency (FSA) before the applicable deadline.

An acreage report documents a crop grown on a farm or ranch and its intended uses. Filing an accurate and timely acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planted acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits.

### How to File a Report

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for Big Horn County:

**July 15, 2021** all crops

Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. Because of the pandemic, some USDA Service Centers are open to limited visitors. Contact the Big Horn County FSA office to set up an in-person or phone appointment.

To file a crop acreage report, you will need to provide:

- Crop and crop type or variety.
- Intended use of the crop.
- Number of acres of the crop.
- Map with approximate boundaries for the crop.
- Planting date(s).
- Planting pattern, when applicable.
- Producer shares.
- Irrigation practice(s).
- Acreage prevented from planting, when applicable.
- Other information as required.

### Acreage Reporting Details

The following exceptions apply to acreage reporting dates:

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

If a producer acquires additional acreage after the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.

Producers should also report crop acreage they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were unable to plant. 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 USDA’s Risk Management Agency.

Noninsured 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.

More Information
For questions, please contact the Big Horn County FSA office at (307)765-2689 Ext 2.

Using FSA Direct Farm Ownership Loans for Construction

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.

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.

Direct Farm Ownership Loans can be used to construct, purchase or improve farm dwellings, service buildings or other facilities, and to make improvements essential to an operation.

Applicants must provide FSA with an estimate of the total cost of all planned development that completely describe the work, prior to loan approval and must show proof of sufficient funds to pay for the total cost of all planned development at or before loan closing. In some instances, applicants may be asked to provide certified plans, specifications or contract documents. The applicant cannot incur any debts for materials or labor or make any expenditures for development purposes prior to loan closing with the expectation of being reimbursed from FSA funds.

Construction and development work may be performed either by the contract method or the borrower method. Under the contract method, construction and development contractors perform work according to a written contract with the applicant or borrower. If applying for a direct loan to finance a construction project, the applicant must obtain a surety bond that guarantees both payment and performance in the amount of the construction contract from a construction contractor.

A surety bond is required when a contract exceeds $100,000. An authorized agency official determines that a surety bond appears advisable to protect the borrower against default of the contractor or a contract provides for partial payments in excess of the amount of 60 percent of the value of the work in place.

Under the borrower method, the applicant or borrower will perform the construction and development work. The borrower method may only be used when the authorized agency official determines, based on information from the applicant, that the applicant possesses or arranges to obtain the necessary skill and managerial ability to complete the work satisfactorily and that such work will not interfere with the applicant’s farming operation or work schedule.

Potential applicants should visit with FSA early in the initial project planning process to ensure environmental compliance.
For more eligibility requirements and information about FSA Loan programs, contact the Washakie County USDA Service Center at 307-347-2456 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Big Horn County Service Center
408 Greybull Ave
Greybull, WY 82426
Phone: 307-765-2689
Fax: 855-415-3432

Brenda Miller, CED
brenda.miller@usda.gov

Connie Werbelow, PT
connie.werbelow@usda.gov

Bill Morrison, Farm Loan
307-347-2456
bill.morrison@usda.gov

Tom Schambow, Farm Loan
307-754-9301
thomas.schambow@usda.gov

County Committee:
Michael Rasmussen
Spencer Ellis
Martin Mercer