Message From Big Horn County FSA

Fall is in the air and harvest season is winding down. It’s that time of year for producers in our Local Administrative Area #1, the Hyattville and Shell communities, to be receiving ballots for our County Committee election. Please take the time to vote and return your ballots to our office by December 6, this is an important part of our office and gives you, our producers, a voice in decisions through your area representative.

The deadline is fast approaching for the 2022 Non-Insurable Assistance Program. December 1, 2021 is the deadline to purchase coverage for biennial and perennial forage crops and honey. If you had coverage last year for your grazing, you only need to send your fee for the continuous coverage to complete your signup. Please see the article in this newsletter for further information.

There has been a change to the Emergency Conservation Program which requires our office to complete the Environmental Assessments and State Historical review prior to starting any projects. We have run into a bit of a roadblock on these reviews which may hold up some of the projects until next spring. If you signed up for the Emergency Conservation Program for a stock water system, please check with this office prior to starting any of your project to avoid loss in benefits.

With harvest of barley, wheat, and oats completed and corn well underway I wanted to remind each of you about the Marketing Assistance Loans. Loans are also available for honey and wool. These loans are a good financial management tool to help you better market your crops. If you have any of these commodities and would like to look into a Marketing Assistance Loan, please contact this office and we can discuss your options.

I would like to wish each of you a very Happy Thanksgiving!

Elections for the 2022 County Committee

Voting is now open for the USDA’s Farm Service Agency’s (FSA) Big Horn County Committee.

It is important that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the USDA. The 2021 election in Big Horn County will be conducted for the representative for Local Administrative Area (LAA): 1 which is all ground east of the Big Horn River south of Sheep mountain, excluding land south of Manderson to Washakie county line.

County committee members are a critical component of FSA operations. Committees should be comprised of members who reflect the diversity of producers involved in production agriculture in Big Horn County. This means that producers representing underserved groups or communities should be on the committee to speak on behalf of their constituency. Underserved producers are beginning, women and other minority farmers and ranchers and landowners and/or operators who have limited resources. Other minority groups including Native American and Alaska Natives; persons under the poverty level, and persons that have disabilities are also considered underserved.

County committee election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Nov. 1, 2021. The last day to return completed ballots to the Big Horn County USDA Service Center is Dec. 6, 2021.

For more information on eligibility to serve on FSA county committees, visit: fsa.usda.gov/elections.
Big Horn County Producers Urged to Consider NAP Risk Protection Coverage Before Crop Sales Deadlines

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages you to review available USDA crop risk protection options, including federal crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, before the crop deadline of December 1, 2021 for Biennial and Perennial Forage crops and Honey.

Federal crop insurance covers crop losses from natural adversities such as drought, hail and excessive moisture. NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available.

You can determine if crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP by visiting the RMA website.

NAP offers higher levels of coverage, from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Producers of organics and crops marketed directly to consumers also may exercise the “buy-up” option to obtain NAP coverage of 100 percent of the average market price at the coverage levels of between 50 and 65 percent of expected production. NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production.

For all coverage levels, the NAP service fee is the lesser of $325 per crop or $825 per producer per county, not to exceed a total of $1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties.

Beginning, underserved, veterans and limited resource farmers are now eligible for free catastrophic level coverage.

Federal crop insurance coverage is sold and delivered solely through private insurance agents. Agent lists are available at all USDA Service Centers or at USDA’s online Agent Locator. You can use the USDA Cost Estimator to predict insurance premium costs.

For more information on NAP, service fees, sales deadlines, contact your Big Horn County USDA Service Center at (307)765-2689 Ext 2 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Qualified veteran farmers or ranchers are eligible for a service fee waiver and premium reduction, if the NAP applicant meets certain eligibility criteria.

Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires Federal agencies to consider all potential environmental impacts for federally funded projects before the project is approved.

For all Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs, an environmental review must be completed before actions are approved, such as site preparation or ground disturbance. These programs include, but are not limited to, the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program and farm loans. If project implementation begins before FSA has completed an environmental review, the request will be denied. Although there are exceptions regarding the Stafford Act and emergencies, it’s important to wait until you receive written approval of your project proposal before starting any actions.

Applications cannot be approved until FSA has copies of all permits and plans. Contact your local FSA office early in your planning process to determine what level of environmental review is required for your program application so that it can be completed timely.

Update Your Records

FSA is cleaning up our producer record database and needs your help. Please report any changes of address, zip code, phone number, email address or an incorrect name or business name on file to our office. You should also report changes in your farm operation, like the addition of a farm by lease or purchase. You should also report any changes to your operation in which you reorganize to form a Trust, LLC or other legal entity.

FSA and NRCS program participants are required to promptly report changes in their farming operation to the County Committee in writing and to update their Farm Operating Plan on form CCC-902.

To update your records, contact your Big Horn County USDA Service Center at (307)765-2689 Ext.2.
Applying for Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) makes loans to youth to establish and operate agricultural income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is $5,000.

Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

- Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien
- Be 10 years to 20 years of age
- Comply with FSA’s general eligibility requirements
- Be unable to get a loan from other sources
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the youth loan applicant, along with providing adequate supervision.

For help preparing the application forms, contact your Big Horn County USDA Service Center at (307)765-2689 Ext 2 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

FSA Outlines 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 (barley, corn, oats), wool and honey. MALs provide you with interim financing after harvest to help you meet cash flow needs without having to sell your 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. Marketing loan provisions and LDPs are not available for sugar and extra-long staple cotton.

FSA is now accepting requests for 2021 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, you must have form CCC-633EZ, Page 1 on file at your 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.

Marketing loan gains (MLGs) and loan deficiency payments (LDPs) are no longer subject to payment limitations, actively engaged in farming and cash-rent tenant rules.

Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) provisions state that if your total applicable three-year average AGI exceeds $900,000, then you’re not eligible to receive an MLG or LDP. You must have a valid CCC-941 on file to earn a market gain of LDP. The AGI does not apply to MALs redeemed with commodity certificate exchange.

For more information and additional eligibility requirements, contact your Big Horn County USDA Service Center at (307) 765-2689 Ext 2 or visit fsa.usda.gov.
Applying for Beginning Farmer Loans

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) assists beginning farmers to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

◊ Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
◊ Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
◊ Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
◊ Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county’s average size farm.

For more information contact, contact your Big Horn County USDA Service Center at (307)765-2689 Ext. 2 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Important Dates

November 25   Thanksgiving– Office Closed   January 17   Equality Day– Office Closed
December 1    NAP sales closing deadline for 2022   January 30    LFP Livestock Forage Program2021 Deadline
December 24   Christmas Eve– Office Closed   Jan. 30   ELAP Water Hauling & Livestock Feed Transportation Deadline
December 31   New Years Eve– Office Closed   March 15   ARC/PLC Signup Deadline

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting should contact Brenda Miller at 307-765-2689 extension 2 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.