From Brenda’s Desk

USDA Offers Online Tool for Drought-Stricken Ranchers to Estimate Compensation for Feed Transportation Costs

ELAP Covers Losses from Additional Cost of Transporting Water to Livestock

 Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their Operation

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With the end of the calendar fast approaching I hope this newsletter finds you all happy and healthy and gearing up for the holiday season. Our office is currently busy with the continued disaster programs due to the current drought situation. In this newsletter you will find an article on the Feed Transportation and Water Hauling programs. Please take time to read these if you have been forced to purchase excess feed for your livestock or haul water that normally isn’t necessary to a pasture to allow grazing.

It is also time to re-enroll your farm in the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage ARC/PLC program. This is an annual enrollment and this year you may elect to switch your election between these programs. The enrollment deadline for the ARC/PLC Program is March 15, 2022. If you know your 2022 plans, please stop by our office and complete your signup.

Also, if you are making any changes to your farming operation, i.e., picking up new land, letting land go, changing shares in your corporation, forming an entity, or even changing your financial institution please keep us informed of these changes to allow us to better assist you on program signups.

A Special Thank You and Best Wishes to Bill Morrison, Farm Loan Manager, Washakie/Hot Springs/Big Horn Counties. After 34 years of service starting in Wray and Greeley Colorado, then moving to Sundance and Afton Wyoming before landing in Worland he has decided it is time to go fishing. Bill has been the Farm Loan Manager in Worland for 25+ years. Bill has been a staple in the Farm Loan division for Wyoming and will be greatly missed. His last day will be December 30, 2021. Happy Fishing Bill!!

Connie, the County Committee, and I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

USDA Offers Online Tool for Drought-Stricken Ranchers to Estimate Compensation for Feed Transportation Costs

An online tool is now available to help ranchers document and estimate payments to cover feed transportation costs caused by drought, which are now covered by the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) updated the program this year to include feed transportation costs as well as lowered the threshold for when assistance for water hauling expenses is available. USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) will begin taking applications this fall.

The new ELAP Feed Transportation Producer Tool is a Microsoft Excel workbook that enables ranchers to input information specific to their operation to determine an estimated payment. Final payments may vary depending on eligibility.

To use the tool, ranchers will need:
- Number of truckloads for this year.
- Mileage per truckload this year.
- Share of feed cost this year (if splitting loads).
- Number of truckloads you normally haul.
- Normal mileage per truckload.
- Share of normal feed cost

The tool requires Microsoft Excel, and a tutorial video is available.

**Updates to ELAP**

ELAP provides financial assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish for losses due to disease, certain adverse weather events or loss conditions as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture. ELAP now covers feed transportation costs where grazing and hay resources have been depleted. This includes places where:

- Drought intensity is D2 for eight consecutive weeks as indicated by the U.S. Drought Monitor; or
- Drought intensity is D3 or greater.

The tool calculates the estimated payment for feed transportation assistance, but it is not an application. Once FSA begins accepting applications later this fall for feed transportation assistance, ranchers should contact their FSA county office to apply. To simplify the application process, ranchers can print or email payment estimates generated by this tool for submission to FSA. The deadline to apply for ELAP, including feed transportation costs, for 2021 is **Jan. 31, 2022**.

ELAP already covers above normal costs for hauling water to livestock in areas where drought intensity is D3 or greater on the drought monitor. FSA is also updating ELAP to also cover water hauling in areas experiencing D2 for eight consecutive weeks, lowering the threshold for this assistance to be available. Program benefits are retroactive for 2021.

**Payment Calculations**

USDA will reimburse eligible ranchers 60% of feed transportation costs above what would have been incurred in a normal year. Producers qualifying as underserved (socially disadvantaged, limited resource, beginning or military veteran) will be reimbursed for 90% of the feed transportation cost above what would have been incurred in a normal year.

USDA uses a national cost formula to determine reimbursement costs that will not include the first 25 miles and distances exceeding 1,000 transportation miles. The calculation will also exclude the normal cost to transport hay or feed if the producer normally purchases some feed. For 2021, the initial cost formula of $6.60 per mile will be used (before the percentage is applied).

**Eligibility**

To be eligible for ELAP assistance, livestock must be intended for grazing and producers must have incurred feed transportation costs on or after Jan. 1, 2021. Although producers will self-certify losses and expenses to FSA, producers are encouraged to maintain good records and retain receipts and related documentation in the event these documents are requested for review by the local FSA County Committee.

**More Drought Recovery Information**

USDA has taken additional steps to assist drought-impacted producers, including:

- Extending deadlines for crop insurance premium and administrative fees, and deferring interest accrual.
- Streamlining and accelerating losses and issuance of indemnity payments for crop insurance.
- Investing $41.8 million through a four-state pilot of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program Conservation Incentive Contracts focused on drought practices.
• Investing $15 million through a block grant to the Klamath Drought Response Agency to provide payments to producers to reduce irrigation demand.

USDA offers a comprehensive portfolio of disaster assistance programs. On farmers.gov, the Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool, Disaster Assistance-at-a-Glance fact sheet, and Farm Loan Discovery Tool can help producers and landowners determine all program or loan options available for disaster recovery assistance. For details, producers should contact their local USDA Service Center.

### 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.

Eligible livestock must be adult or non-adult dairy cattle, beef cattle, buffalo and beelfalo, 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.

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 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

### Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their Operation

Farmers and ranchers can use the Farm Loan Discovery Tool on farmers.gov to find information on USDA farm loans that may best fit their operations.

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.

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 receive 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 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 to find disaster assistance programs that can help their operation recover from natural disasters.

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