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From the Sheryl’s Desk

Happy Fall! As we wrap up fall work and prepare for winter don’t forget about available programs and upcoming deadlines.

Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP): Both Carbon and Albany Countites are eligible for the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) due to drought conditions on grazing land for 2021. Currently, Carbon County is eligible for 5 months of payment and Albany County is eligible for 4 months. To be eligible for this program, you must have ownership interest in the livestock and the grass for grazing. The deadline to apply is January 30, 2022. We will need the following information to process your application:

- Weaned livestock numbers as of January 1, 2021 - in the following categories: adult cattle; non-adult cattle over 500 lbs; non-adult cattle under 500 lbs; sheep- ewes, rams, yearlings; horses used for ranch work; for other eligible livestock please contact the office.
- Livestock documentation - such as, but not limited to, vet preg check bills/records, fertility checking records, bangs vaccinations, brand inspections, sales/purchase receipts, herd records, loan documents showing livestock claimed as collateral, etc.
- Livestock sold in 2020 - type and kind of livestock sold in 2020 due to drought, not normal operation practice. Must provide copy of sale receipts.
- Leases - current copies of all private land leases and Forest Service permits. If you do not have written leases on the private land, let me know and I can send you our form that must be completed by you and the owner to determine if the acres are eligible. Please remember a straight AUM lease is not considered eligible acres for you, unless the agreement is that you provide capital expenditures on the property such as fencing repairs/replacement and water source repairs. Checking fence is not considered a capital expenditure.

Non-Insurable Assistance Program (NAP): we are selling 2022 policies now. The deadline to purchase your coverage for hay and/or grazing is December 1, 2021.

Also, if you have a 2021 hay policy and have a production loss due to drought conditions make sure to file your Notice of Loss and Application for Payment by October 31, 2021.

Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP): If you hauled water to livestock this year due to drought conditions, please make sure to get your documentation and Application for Payment into the office by January 30, 2022.

There are changes coming to this program to assist with the transportation costs of feed purchased due to the drought conditions. More specific information can be found in the specific article in this newsletter. We are told that sign up for this will begin in early November and the deadline will be January 31, 2022.
**Office Staffing** - Washington DC has determined that due to the increase in the Delta variant of COVID that all USDA offices in Wyoming will be locked and closed to the public. We are open by phone or email appointments only.

Additionally, this office is back to being staffed by only one employee. If you call and receive the voicemail system, PLEASE leave your name, number, and a brief message. I do NOT have caller ID so I am not aware of who is calling if you don’t leave a message. I will return all messages as soon as possible.

**Upcoming Deadlines:**

Oct. 31 - Last day to file NAP Notice of Loss for hay production

Nov. 1 - Organic Cost Share Program Deadline

Nov. 11 - Veteran’s Day- Office Closed

Nov. 25 - Thanksgiving- Office Closed

Dec. 1 - NAP Purchase Deadline for Grazing and Forage Crops

Jan. 30 - LFP application and ELAP water hauling deadline

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**USDA Expands Assistance to Cover Feed Transportation Costs for Drought-Impacted Ranchers**

In response to the severe drought conditions in the West and Great Plains, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced today its plans to help cover the cost of transporting feed for livestock that rely on grazing. USDA is updating the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) to immediately cover feed transportation costs for drought impacted ranchers. USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) will provide more details and tools to help ranchers get ready to apply at their local USDA Service Center later this month at fsa.usda.gov/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 already covers the cost of hauling water during drought, and this change will expand the program beginning in 2021 to cover 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 [S. Drought Monitor](https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu);
- Drought intensity is D3 or greater; or
- USDA has determined a shortage of local or regional feed availability.

Cost share assistance will also be made available to cover eligible cost of treating hay or feed to prevent the spread of invasive pests like fire ants.

Under the revised policy for feed transportation cost assistance, eligible ranchers will be reimbursed 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.

A national cost formula, as established by USDA, will be used to determine reimbursement costs which 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), but may be adjusted on a state or regional basis.

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. The deadline to file an application for payment for the 2021 program year is Jan. 31, 2022.

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.

More information on this expansion to ELAP is forthcoming. In the meantime, more information is available at fsa.usda.gov/elap or by contacting a local USDA Service Center.

FSA Encourages Farmers and Ranchers to Vote in County Committee Elections

The 2021 Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections will begin on Nov. 1, 2021, when ballots are mailed to eligible voters. The deadline to return ballots to local FSA offices, or to be postmarked, is Dec. 6, 2021.

County committee members are an important component of the operations of FSA and provide a link between the agricultural community and USDA. Farmers and ranchers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity price support programs; conservation programs; incentive indemnity and disaster programs for some commodities; emergency programs and eligibility. FSA committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm, may also be eligible to vote. A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation(s) but may not have applied or received FSA program benefits.

Eligible voters in local administrative areas 2 and 5, who do not receive a ballot can obtain one from their local USDA Service Center.

Newly elected committee members will take office Jan. 1, 2022.

The candidates in this year’s election are:

Cheryl Munroe is nominated in LAA 2 (Saratoga-Encampment-Rawlins Conservation District Area), Carbon County, to serve as a committee member for a 3-year term. Munroe resides in Encampment and has produced alfalfa and grass hay and raised cattle for many years.

Ryan Wilson is nominated in LAA 5 (South Albany County area), to serve as a committee member for a 3-year term. Wilson resides in Bosler and has produced grass hay and raised cattle for many years.

More information on county committees, such as the new 2021 fact sheet, can be found on the FSA website at fsa.usda.gov/elections or at a local USDA Service Center.

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 the Platte County USDA Service Center at 307-322-4050 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Linkage Requirements for Payments Received Under WHIP+ and/or QLA

If you received a payment under the Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program+ (WHIP+) or the Quality Loss Adjustment Program (QLA) for crop production and/or quality losses occurring in 2018, 2019, or 2020 crop years, you are required to meet linkage requirements by obtaining federal crop insurance or Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage at the 60/100 level, or higher, for both the 2022 and 2023 crop years.

When applying for WHIP+ or QLA, form FSA-895 (Crop Insurance and/or NAP Coverage Agreement) was submitted acknowledging the requirement to obtain federal crop insurance, if available, or NAP coverage if federal crop insurance is not available. The coverage requirement is applicable to the physical location county of the crop that received WHIP+ and/or QLA benefits.

Producers should not delay contacting their federal crop insurance agent or local county FSA Office to inquire about coverage options, as failure to obtain the applicable coverage by the sales/application closing date will result in the required refund of WHIP+ benefits received on the applicable crop, plus interest. You can determine if crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP by visiting the RMA website.

For more information, contact your Carbon/Albany County USDA Service Center at 307-326-5657 or visit fsa.usda.gov.
County Committee

Ryan Wilson, Chairman
Cheryl Munroe, Vice-Chair
Mary Ann Boles, Member
Robin Carter, Member
Darcy Kaisler, Member