Crook County Office Updates

I hope this newsletter finds everyone well! This summer has been very busy at the FSA office. We would like to thank everyone for their ongoing patience as we work through the high numbers of applications, in all of our drought assistance programs. We are working on them in order of the deadline dates, so we ensure everyone meets the application deadlines for all of the programs we have going on right now. Please know that payments will be processed as quickly as possible.

We understand that a-lot of you are needing this for hay and we are working as fast as both of us can under the workload and the parameters of the programs.

For the Emergency Water program, we are waiting on the Environmental Review to be able to let you guys know if the applications were approved. We apologize that this is taking longer than anticipated but we have done what we can on our end for this and have to wait for the confirmation on this before we can let anyone know the outcome of the applications.

Just recently, FSA announced assistance for feed transportation through the Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP). This could be a great relief for many producers buying hay due to the shortage of grass available this year. We are currently working on putting together the application process and understanding the rule changes to make this happen. Until all of the necessary pieces are in place, we do not have any additional information on this new provision, nor are we able to take applications for it. More will follow about this assistance as we learn more about how FSA will provide this assistance. Once we are able to process these applications, we will let you know.

If you are planting anything this fall, please schedule an acreage reporting appointment when planting is complete. We have been able to allow producers in the office (by appointment only) This will be something that is still in effect so if you need to come in just call and set up a time. December 1 sales closing date for fall seeded crops and perennials for NAP. Another reminder on NAP is that the Grazing cannot be paid until the end of the year when the grazing loss for the year for Crook County has been determined.

NRCS on Timber Improvement

If you are considering doing any timber improvement work on your property, please contact the NRCS office to schedule a field visit this fall before winter hits so we can help plan the best conservation approach with your timber.

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.

### Additional Drought Assistance.

Other programs are available for livestock producers. Producers who experience livestock deaths and feed losses due to natural disasters may be eligible for the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP). This program also provides eligible producers with compensation for expenses associated with transporting water to livestock physically located in a county that is designated as level “D3 Drought - Extreme” according to the Drought Monitor.

More information on disaster assistance programs is available on farmers.gov, including the Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool, Disaster Assistance At a Glance brochure, and Farm Loan Discovery Tool can help producers and landowners determine program or loan options. For assistance with a crop insurance claim, producers and landowners should contact their crop insurance agent. For FSA and NRCS programs, they should contact their local USDA Service Center.

### USDA Announces Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is providing up to $200 million to provide relief to timber harvesting and timber hauling businesses that have experienced losses due to COVID-19 as part of USDA’s Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative. Loggers and truckers can apply for assistance through USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) July 22 through Oct. 15, 2021. The Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers program (PATHH) is administered by FSA in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, authorized this critical assistance for the timber industry. Timber harvesting and hauling businesses that have experienced a gross revenue loss of at least 10% during the period of Jan. 1 and Dec. 1, 2020, compared to the period of Jan. 1 and Dec. 1, 2019, are encouraged to apply.

#### Program Details

To be eligible for payments, individuals or legal entities must be a timber harvesting or timber hauling business where 50% or more of its gross revenue is derived from one or more of the following:

- Cutting timber.
- Transporting timber.
- Processing of wood on-site on the forest land (chipping, grinding, converting to biochar, cutting to smaller lengths, etc.).

Payments will be based on the applicant’s gross revenue received from Jan. 1, 2019, through Dec. 1, 2019, minus gross revenue received from Jan. 1, 2020, through Dec. 1, 2020, multiplied by 80%. FSA will issue an initial payment equal to the lesser of the calculated payment amount or $2,000 as applications are approved. A second payment will be made after the signup period has ended based upon remaining PATHH funds.
The maximum amount that a person or legal entity may receive directly is $125,000.

**Applying for Assistance**

Loggers and truckers can apply for PATHH beginning on July 22 by completing form FSA-1118, Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers Program application, and certifying to their gross revenue for 2019 and 2020 on the application. Additional documentation may be required. Visit [farmers.gov/pathh](https://farmers.gov/pathh) for more information on how to apply.

Applications can be submitted to the FSA office at any USDA Service Center nationwide by mail, fax, hand delivery, or via electronic means. To find a local FSA office, loggers and truckers can visit [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator). They can also call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance.