Niobrara County Notes - FSA

Greetings Niobrara County Farmers and Ranchers!

As we continue to endure restrictions due to COVID, please note that while our door is still locked, you can call the office to schedule an in-person appointment with a staff member. We are also available via telephone or email, so please feel free to call us if there’s anything we can assist you with.

Wool producers, please remember that Wool LDP’s are at $.40/lb, so if you’ve shorn this year, please contact the office with your production for 2021 so that you can apply for LDP benefits.

Please also remember that this is the time of year to be letting us know of changes to your operation – land sold, land purchased, new leases, expired leases, etc. These changes are much easier to get updated now, in order to timely report them for 2021 program purposes, rather than after we become eligible for programs later in the year, after the acreage reporting deadline has passed.

On that note, if you haven’t reported your acres for 2021, please consider doing so. Timely reporting acres will prevent you from having to pay a late file fee later in the year if the county becomes eligible for programs that require acreage reports, such as disaster programs. Please call the office to make an appointment or find out if you’ve reported already if you aren’t positive.

Also, please keep in mind the different impacts that FSA can assist with. If your current water sources reach a point of being unable to keep up, and you have to implement alternative solutions, please let the office know. If you experience weather events that cause grazing losses, please also let us know. There are many different programs and resources available for varying weather events and impacts.

The heat and wind have sure changed the conditions for Niobrara County. If you feel conditions are bad enough at any point to warrant drought classifications on the drought monitor, please visit droughtreporter.unl.edu/submitreport/ to report drought conditions and impacts in your area, as many FSA programs are reliant upon the drought monitor for eligibility. The folks who review these reports strongly encourage comparison photos of this year vs what a normal year looks like or photos of a post hole dug showing the moisture, or lack thereof.

Keep praying for rain!

-Niobrara County FSA Staff

Please note the following important dates and deadlines: July 5, 2021 – OFFICE CLOSED – Independence Day Holiday

July 15, 2021 – 2021 Acreage Reporting Deadline

Within 15 days of noticing crop loss – File NAP Notice of Loss

Within 30 days of noticing livestock, pasture, or feed loss – File LIP/ELAP Notice of Loss
Nominations Open for the 2021 County Committee Elections

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages all farmers, ranchers, and FSA program participants to take part in the Niobrara County Committee election nomination process.

FSA’s county committees are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA and allow grassroots input and local administration of federal farm programs.

Committees are comprised of locally elected agricultural producers responsible for the fair and equitable administration of FSA farm programs in their counties. Committee members are accountable to the Secretary of Agriculture. If elected, members become part of a local decision making and farm program delivery process.

A county committee is composed of 3 to 11 elected members from local administrative areas (LAA). Each member serves a three-year term. One-third of the seats on these committees are open for election each year.

County committees may have an appointed advisor to further represent the local interests of underserved farmers and ranchers. Underserved producers are beginning, women and other minority farmers and ranchers and landowners and/or operators who have limited resources.

In Niobrara County, LAA #2, the area of Niobrara County that is north of the breaks is the LAA that is up for election in 2021.

All nomination forms for the 2021 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA service center by Aug. 2, 2021.

For more information on FSA county committee elections and appointments, refer to the FSA fact sheet: Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a COC Member available online at: fsa.usda.gov/elections.

USDA Reminds Producers to Complete Crop Acreage Reports for Perennial and Spring-Seeded Crops

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds agricultural producers in Niobrara County to complete crop acreage reports by the July 15 deadline for perennial and spring-seeded crops.

To complete your acreage report, please call the Niobrara County FSA office to schedule an appointment. FSA can work with producers to file timely acreage reports by phone, email, online tools and virtual meetings as well as by appointment in person.

After planting is complete, producers must return the signed form certifying their acreage report to the FSA office via mail, email or fax by July 15, 2021.

The following exception applies to acreage reporting dates:

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

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.

For questions, please call the Niobrara County FSA office at 307-334-2953, Ext. 2.
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.

Conservation Efforts Continue on America's Farms, Ranches Amid Challenging Year

The USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service continued its conservation work across the country despite a tough 2020 marked with a pandemic and several natural disasters. The agency helped farmers, ranchers and forest landowners implement conservation practices on their working lands, which help conserve natural resource such as soil, water and wildlife as well as boost producers' bottom lines. Additionally, NRCS launched new online tools that increased the efficiency, effectiveness and delivery of crucial programs.

This year, NRCS worked with producers and communities to:

- Develop more than 100,000 conservation plans.
- Co-invest $1.32 billion through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to put conservation practices on 10 million acres, as well as $507 million through the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) to put conservation enhancements on 9.3 million acres.
- Enroll more than 430 new easements, totaling 230,000 acres, into the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP).
- Enter into over 420 agreements with local sponsors to cooperatively implement emergency recovery measures through the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) and obligated more than $251 million in EWP funds in FY 2020.
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Phone: 307-334-2953
FSA - Ext. 2 --- NRCS - Ext. 3
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Next County Committee Meeting: TBD