Greetings Niobrara County Farmers and Ranchers!

Niobrara County and many surrounding counties are now eligible for assistance under the Livestock Forage Program (LFP), due to persistent drought conditions. If you’ve sustained grazing losses due to drought, please contact the office for more information on what is eligible and how to apply. If you have a NAP policy on pasture or a yield-based crop that has sustained a loss, please be sure to contact the office to file a notice of loss. USDA has announced recent additions to the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) that will assist producers who have incurred higher feed transportation costs in 2021. More information on this recent expansion of the ELAP program is forthcoming. In the meantime, please be sure to be keeping bills and anything relating to your additional feed transportation costs, and visit fsa.usda.gov/elap for more information.

Annual CRP and ARC/PLC payments will be disbursed throughout the month of October, so if you see money hit your bank account, or receive payment disbursement notifications via mail, those payments have been released. If you haven’t applied for benefits under the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2), the deadline is October 12, 2021, so please contact the office to do so. While it’s easy to feel as if we’re still in summertime, fall is here, and so are our normal fall deadlines. November 15th is the deadline to report fall-seeded crops on an acreage report, and December 1st is the deadline to acquire NAP coverage for 2022 crops, on everything except spring-seeded crops, including pasture. Please always remember, if you encounter any weather-related losses on livestock, crops or pasture, please be sure to call the office within 30 days that a loss is apparent to you, as that is the deadline for most any program intended to assist producers with such losses.

Please be sure to call the office to set up an appointment for anything you might need to stop by the office to complete! Thank you!

-Niobrara County FSA Staff

Please note the following important dates and deadlines:
October 11, 2021 – OFFICE CLOSED – Columbus Day Holiday
October 12, 2021 – Deadline to apply for CFAP 2 benefits
November 15, 2021 – Crop Reporting Deadline for fall-seeded crops
December 1, 2021 – NAP purchase deadline for 2022 crops
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
Apply for Livestock Forage Losses

Producers in Niobrara County are eligible to apply for 2021 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) benefits on native and improved pasture.

LFP provides compensation if you suffer grazing losses for covered livestock due to drought on privately owned or cash leased land or fire on federally managed land.

County committees can only accept LFP applications after notification is received by the National Office of qualifying drought or if a federal agency prohibits producers from grazing normal permitted livestock on federally managed lands due to qualifying fire. You must complete a CCC-853 and the required supporting documentation no later than January 31, 2022, for 2021 losses.

For additional Information about LFP, including eligible livestock and fire criteria, contact your Niobrara County USDA Service Center at 307-334-2953, Ext. 2 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

USDA Reminds Producers to File Crop Acreage Reports

Agricultural producers who have not yet completed their crop acreage reports after spring planting should make an appointment with the Niobrara County Farm Service Agency (FSA) before the applicable deadline.

An acreage report documents a crop grown on a farm or ranch and its intended uses. Filing an accurate and timely acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planted acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits.

How to File a Report

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for Niobrara County:

November 15, 2021                Fall-Seeded Crops

Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. Because of the pandemic, some USDA Service Centers are open to limited visitors. Contact the Niobrara County FSA office to set up an in-person or phone appointment.

Acreage Reporting Details

The following exceptions apply to acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.

Producers should also report crop acreage they intended to plant, but due to natural disaster, were unable to plant. Prevented planting acreage must be reported on form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and USDA’s Risk Management Agency.

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.
More Information

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

Keeping Livestock Inventory Records

Livestock inventory records are necessary in the event of a natural disaster, so remember to keep them updated.

When disasters strike, the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) can help you if you’ve suffered excessive livestock death losses and grazing or feed losses due to eligible natural disasters.

To participate in livestock disaster assistance programs, you’ll be required to provide verifiable documentation of death losses resulting from an eligible adverse weather event and must submit a notice of loss to your local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is apparent. For grazing or feed losses, you must submit a notice of loss to your local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent and should maintain documentation and receipts.

You should record all pertinent information regarding livestock inventory records including:

- Documentation of the number, kind, type, and weight range of livestock
- Beginning inventory supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts.

For more information on documentation requirements, contact your Niobrara County USDA Service Center at 307-334-2953, Ext. 2 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

USDA Updates Conservation Provisions for Highly Erodible Land and Wetlands

USDA published its final rule on determining whether land is considered highly erodible or a wetland, integrating input from the public and making updates in accordance with the 2018 Farm Bill. This final rule follows a focused effort by USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to improve consistency and use of science in making determinations.

To be eligible for most USDA programs, producers must be conservation compliant with the highly erodible land and wetland provisions. These provisions aim to reduce soil loss on erosion-prone lands and to protect wetlands for the multiple benefits they provide.

The final rule was made available for public inspection today, and it will be published tomorrow in the Federal Register. This follows an interim final rule published Dec. 7, 2018.

This final rule confirms most of the changes made by the December 2018 interim final rule and makes these additional updates:

1. Adding the requirement of the 2018 Farm Bill that USDA will make a reasonable effort to include the affected person in an on-site investigation conducted prior to making a wetland violation technical determination.
2. Further clarifying how wetland hydrology is identified for farmed wetlands and farmed wetland pasture.
3. Adding clarification to the consideration of best-drained condition for wetland hydrology in keeping with the definition of prior converted cropland.
4. Relocating the provision that wetland determinations can be done on a tract, field, or sub-field basis in order to improve clarity.
NRCS has recently updated its conservation compliance webpages, adding highly erodible land and wetland determination resources for agricultural producers by state. Learn more about conservation compliance on the NRCS website.

**Preauthorized Debit Available for Farm Loan Borrowers**

USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) has implemented pre-authorized debit (PAD) for Farm Loan Program (FLP) borrowers. PAD is a voluntary and alternative method for making weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annual or annual payments on loans.

PAD payments are pre-authorized transactions that allow the National Financial and Accounting Operations Center (NFAOC) to electronically collect loan payments from a customer’s account at a financial institution.

PAD may be useful if you use nonfarm income from regular wages or salary to make payments on loans or adjustment offers or for payments from seasonal produce stands. PAD can only be established for future payments.

To request PAD, customers, along with their financial institution, must fill out form RD 3550-28. This form has no expiration date, but a separate form RD 3550-28 must be completed for each loan to which payments are to be applied. A fillable form can be accessed on the USDA Rural Development (RD) website at rd.usda.gov/publications/regulations-guidelines. Click forms and search for “Form 3550-28.”

If you have a “filter” on the account at your financial institution, you will need to provide the financial institution with the following information: Origination ID: 1220040804, Agency Name: USDA RD DCFO

PAD is offered by FSA at no cost. Check with your financial institution to discuss any potential cost. Preauthorized debit has no expiration date, but you can cancel at any time by submitting a written request to your local FSA office. If a preauthorized debit agreement receives three payment rejections within a three-month period, the preauthorized debit agreement will be cancelled by FSA. The payment amount and due date of your loan is not affected by a cancellation of preauthorized debit. You are responsible to ensure your full payment is made by the due date.

For more information about PAD, contact your Platte County USDA Service Center at 307-322-4050 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

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**Niobrara County USDA Service Center**

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Lusk, WY 82225

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Jason ZumBrunnen, Vice Chairman
Joe Kruse
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Next County Committee Meeting:
October 21, 2021

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