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 area, 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.

LAA1:
Emily Karst is nominated in LAA 1.

Disaster Assistance for 2021 Livestock Forage Losses

Producers in Park County are eligible to apply for 2021 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) benefits on native 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 submit the required supporting documentation no later than January 20, 2022, for 2021 losses.

For additional information about LFP, including eligible livestock and fire criteria, contact the Park County USDA Service Center at (307) 754-9411, Ext. 2.
Applying for Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) makes loans to youth to establish and operate agricultural income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is $5,000.

Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

1. Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien
2. Be 10 years to 20 years of age
3. Comply with FSA’s general eligibility requirements
4. Be unable to get a loan from other sources
5. Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above
6. Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the youth loan applicant, along with providing adequate supervision.

For help preparing the application forms, contact your Park County USDA Service Center at 307-754-8411 x 2 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Managed Forests Yield the Best Benefits

A tract of private forestland has great potential, but it must be managed well to harness its full benefits. If your woodlands have grown unproductive or overcrowded, consider some simple management techniques like an occasional cutting or thinning to improve them. Improvements to forests are easy – and the best part is, trees typically respond quickly to management techniques.

Thinning is often performed when a forest is overstocked with trees. Cutting the excess trees allows the remaining trees and understory plants to prosper from more sun, water and space. Depending on local markets and the size of the trees, it may be possible to remove and sell the thinned trees to offset the cost of the operation.

Harvest cuttings are used to remove and market logs for profit. Depending on the type of forest you own and your objectives for it, you may want to consider periodic intermediate cuttings to remove some trees of marketable size. Final harvest cutting occurs when the bulk of trees in a stand are removed and sold. After cutting, make sure the land is replanted or has existing younger trees to continue the regeneration of the forest.

USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service helps private landowners make their forests healthier through conservation activities, often called small woodlot improvement. In addition to these management techniques, NRCS helps landowners with other forest-related practices, such as using prescribed burning, installing fire lanes and establishing native grasses.

When land is managed well, it not only helps you, the landowner, but spurs other environmental benefits as well. For more information, contact your District Conservationist, Rory Karhu at the Park County USDA Service Center at (307) 271-3128 office or (307) 462-1748 cell or visit nrcs.usda.gov.
Park County USDA Service Center
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Program Technician
Tanya Butz

County Committee
Emily Karst - Chairperson
Tim Acord - Vice-Chairperson
Lynn George - Regular Member

Next County Committee Meeting: TBD