From the Desk of Linda Benzel, CED

Hello Producers~

Many challenges again this year with the continued drought!

We currently are taking acreage reports, which will need to be on file for future drought programs most likely coming our way. If you haven’t completed your crop (acreage) report for 2021 or haven’t scheduled an appointment, please give our office a call before July 15th. **July 15, 2021** is the deadline date to file.

Also, a reminder, we have a cost-share program for water hauling. If you end up hauling water because of the drought, please call the office within 30 days of when it is apparent to file a Notice of Loss under the ELAP program. When you have finished water hauling, we will need your daily log of how many gallons and trips, along with the number of head you are watering. This will be the second step, an Application for Payment.

How can people contribute to the US Drought Monitor?

There are multiple ways to contribute your observations to the USDM process:

1. **Talk to your state climatologist** - Find the current list at the [American Association of State Climatologists](https://www.aasc.cornell.edu) website.
2. **Email** - Emails sent to droughtmonitor@unl.edu inform the USDM authors.
3. **Become a CoCoRaHS observer** - Submit drought reports along with daily precipitation observations the [Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network](http://coorahs.org).
4. **Submit Condition Monitoring Observer Reports (CMOR)** - [go.unl.edu/CMOR](http://go.unl.edu/CMOR).
5. **Use the drought.gov contact form** - Contact us online at [www.drought.gov/drought/contact-us](http://www.drought.gov/drought/contact-us).

Best Regards,

Linda

Farm Service Agency Accepting Nominations for County Committee Members: Aug. 2 Deadline
The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) began accepting nominations for county committee members on June 15. Elections will occur in certain Local Administrative Areas (LAA) for these members who make important decisions about how federal farm programs are administered locally. All nomination forms for the 2021 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by Aug. 2, 2021. To be considered, a producer must be registered and sign an FSA-669A nomination form. The form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at fsa.usda.gov/elections. Election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Nov. 1, 2021. To find your local USDA Service Center, visit farmers.gov/service-locator.

All nomination forms for the 2021 election must be postmarked or received in the FSA county office by Wednesday, August 1, 2021 for LAA2 (Sheridan Co.) and LAA4 (Johnson Co.).

Map of area boundaries available in the Sheridan Office.

Applying for FSA Guaranteed Loans

FSA guaranteed loans allow lenders to provide agricultural credit to farmers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria. Farmers and ranchers apply for a guaranteed loan through a lender, and the lender arranges for the guarantee. FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. Guaranteed loans can be used for both farm ownership and operating purposes.

Guaranteed farm ownership loans can be used to purchase farmland, construct or repair buildings, develop farmland to promote soil and water conservation or to refinance debt.

Guaranteed operating loans can be used to purchase livestock, farm equipment, feed, seed, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance and other operating expenses.

FSA can guarantee farm ownership and operating loans up to $1,776,000. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the producer's ability to repay the loan. Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years.

For more information on guaranteed loans, contact Rob Weppner, Farm Loan Manager at 307-682-8843 Ext 2 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

New Technology Helps Ranchers Maximize Grass Production

One out of every three acres in the U.S. is rangeland. Two-thirds of these are privately owned, mainly by ranchers who graze their livestock in the open country of the American West. Our rangelands produce premium beef, wool, and dairy. But it’s the plants that feed these livestock that are the foundation for profitable agriculture in the West. But ranchers haven’t had a good way to measure how their grass is faring — until now.

The Rangeland Analysis Platform (RAP), developed in partnership with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the University of Montana, allows producers to track changes in the amount and types of plants growing on their property.

RAP is a free online resource that provides data on vegetation trends across the West from the mid-1980s to the present; and it calculates how productive those plants are. A combination of long-term datasets shows
landowners how their lands have changed over time, which translates directly into their operation’s profitability.

Farmers in the central and eastern U.S. have been using technology to track changes in crop production for decades. As soon as they see that their plant productivity is declining — and revenues following suit — they can take steps to address the limitations and boost productivity again.

RAP provides the same power to ranchers. RAP can show ranchers the gap between their potential production and the actual production they realize in terms of pounds-per-acre of grass. It helps landowners understand how much they can potentially gain by changing management practices to boost available forage and close the gap.

Landowners can see how their plant production has changed in a single month or over the span of several years. The technology can be used to visualize plant productivity in an area as small as a baseball diamond or as large as several states. New technology like RAP helps us “help the land” in order to sustain wildlife, provide food and fiber, and support agricultural families long into the future.