• **Disaster Assistance for 2021 Livestock Forage Losses**

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**From Lisa's Desk:**

I have a few items to note. Please read the following:

- We are still open for business, but due to the latest Covid outbreak, **visitors or producers are no longer allowed in the building**. Call the office at 307-347-2456 ext. 2 as we can still work by phone, by email and/or use the box/one span system for signatures on applications.

- I know that you are experiencing drought – please go out and submit your information to the drought monitor report website. The website is [droughtreporter.unl.edu/submitreport/](droughtreporter.unl.edu/submitreport/). Click on that link, you will be taken to a website with a big green box, under the green box there is text that reads, "Access the report form here." Click on the word here, then you will be taken to the next page and click on the box that states, “open in browser.” The only way we are going to get our actual drought situation to be noticed is by adding data to that website.

- We are taking LFP drought applications for grazing losses. Please see the article below.

- We are still taking ELAP water hauling applications. You need to complete a notice of loss or call in to the office to tell us you are hauling water before you start to haul water.

Call the office if you have any questions at 307-347-2456 ext 2.

Have a great fall harvest!

Lisa Bower

County Executive Director

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**Disaster Assistance for 2021 Livestock Forage Losses**

Producers in Washakie and Hot Springs 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 the required supporting documentation no later than **January 30th, 2022**, for **2021 losses**.

For additional information about LFP, including eligible livestock and fire criteria, contact the Washakie-Hot Springs County USDA Service Center at 307-347-2456 or visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov).
Maintaining Good Credit History

Farm Service Agency (FSA) loans require applicants to have a satisfactory credit history. A credit report is requested for all FSA direct farm loan applicants. These reports are reviewed to verify outstanding debts, see if bills are paid timely and to determine the impact on cash flow.

Information on your credit report is strictly confidential and is used only as an aid in conducting FSA business.

Our farm loan staff will discuss options with you if you have an unfavorable credit report and will provide a copy of your report. If you dispute the accuracy of the information on the credit report, it is up to you to contact the issuing credit report company to resolve any errors or inaccuracies.

There are multiple ways to remedy an unfavorable credit score:

- Make sure to pay bills on time
  - Setting up automatic payments or automated reminders can be an effective way to remember payment due dates.
- Pay down existing debt
- Keep your credit card balances low
- Avoid suddenly opening or closing existing credit accounts

FSA’s farm loan staff will guide you through the process, which may require you to reapply for a loan after improving or correcting your credit report.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, contact your Washakie/Hot Springs County USDA Service Center at 307-347-2456 x 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.

**USDA Continues Conservation Planning and Programs - NRCS Services Available by Phone Appointment Only**

All USDA Service Centers, including Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) field offices, are not currently accessible to customers in person.

NRCS staff are working with customers through phone, mail and online communications, and field work continues with appropriate social distancing to help producers with conservation planning and financial assistance through Farm Bill programs. If you need information on a Farm Bill program deadline, please call your local NRCS field office.

Online services are available to customers with an eAuth account, which provides access to the [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov) portal where producers can view USDA farm loan information and payments and view and track certain USDA program applications and payments. Customers who do not already have an eAuth account can enroll at [farmers.gov/sign-in](https://farmers.gov/sign-in). Online NRCS services are available to customers through the [Conservation Client Gateway link](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov) which can be found at [www.nrcs.usda.gov](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov). Customers can track payments, report completed practices, request conservation assistance and electronically sign documents.

For the most current updates on available services and Service Center contact information, visit [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus)
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**County Committee:**
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Arnold Pennoyer, Member
Everett Jones, Member
Jim Butterfield, Member