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From Lisa's Desk

Greetings. 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.
- 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!

Lisa Bower
County Executive Director

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.

The candidates in this year’s election are:

LAA1:
Jim Butterfield is nominated in LAA 1, Washakie County, to serve as a committee member for a 3-year term. Butterfield resides near Worland and has produced sheep, cattle and hay for his entire life.

He is an active member of Cottonwood/Grass Creek Watershed Improvement District and serves as Chairman and he is a current member of the FSA Washakie-Hot Springs County Committee.

Dave Slover is nominated in LAA 1, Washakie County, to serve as a committee member for a 3-year term. Slover resides near Worland and has produced cattle for 27 years.

He is an active member of the Washakie County Conservation District and the Gooseberry Creek Irrigation District, upon which he serves as Chairman and President respectively.

LAA3:
Reed Lyman is nominated in LAA 3, Washakie County, to serve as a committee member for a 3-year term. Lyman resides near Ten Sleep and has produced cattle for 23 years.

He is not currently an active member of any organization.

Cameron Roady is nominated in LAA 3, Washakie County, to serve as a committee member for a 3-year term. Roady resides near Worland, but his ranch headquarters are in the Ten Sleep area. Roady has produced cattle for 23 years.

He is an active member of the Worland District of the Wyoming State Grazing Board and serves as a member.

LAA5:
Heather Jones is nominated in LAA 5, Hot Springs County, to serve as a committee member for a 3-year term. Jones resides on Kirby Creek and has produced sheep and cattle for over six years.

She is an active member of the Wyoming Wool Growers and serves as a voting member.

Billie Jo Norsworthy is nominated in LAA 5, Hot Springs County, to serve as a committee member for a 3-year term. Norsworthy resides in Thermopolis and has produced cattle, niche wool and hay for years.

She is an active member of Hot Springs County Fair Board, the Central Wyoming Cutting Club and the Lucerne Irrigation District Board and serves as a voting member.

More information on county committees, such as the new 2021 fact sheet, can be found on the FSA website at fsa.usda.gov/elections or at a local USDA Service Center.

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**Apply for Livestock Forage Losses**

Producers in Washakie or 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 your Washakie-Hot Springs County USDA Service Center at 307-347-2456 ext. 2 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

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**Using FSA Direct Farm Ownership Loans for Construction**

The USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Direct Farm Ownership loans are a resource to help farmers and ranchers become owner-operators of family farms, improve and expand current operations, increase agricultural productivity, and assist with land tenure to save farmland for future generations.

There are three types of Direct Farm Ownership Loans: regular, down payment and joint financing. FSA also offers a Direct Farm Ownership Microloan option for smaller financial needs up to $50,000.

Direct Farm Ownership Loans can be used to construct, purchase or improve farm dwellings, service buildings or other facilities, and to make improvements essential to an operation.

Applicants must provide FSA with an estimate of the total cost of all planned development that completely describe the work, prior to loan approval and must show proof of sufficient funds to pay for the total cost of all planned development at or before loan closing. In some instances, applicants may be asked to provide certified plans, specifications or contract documents. The applicant cannot incur any debts for materials or labor or make any expenditures for development purposes prior to loan closing with the expectation of being reimbursed from FSA funds.

Construction and development work may be performed either by the contract method or the borrower method. Under the contract method, construction and development contractors perform work according to a written contract with the applicant or borrower. If applying for a direct loan to finance a construction project, the applicant must obtain a surety bond that guarantees both payment and performance in the amount of the construction contract from a construction contractor.

A surety bond is required when a contract exceeds $100,000. An authorized agency official determines that a surety bond appears advisable to protect the borrower against default of the contractor or a contract provides for partial payments in excess of the amount of 60 percent of the value of the work in place.

Under the borrower method, the applicant or borrower will perform the construction and development work. The borrower method may only be used when the authorized agency official determines, based on information from the applicant, that the applicant possesses or arranges to obtain the necessary skill and managerial ability to complete the work satisfactorily and that such work will not interfere with the applicant’s farming operation or work schedule.

Potential applicants should visit with FSA early in the initial project planning process to ensure environmental compliance.

For more eligibility requirements and information about FSA Loan programs, contact Washakie/Hot Springs County USDA Service Center at 307-347-2456 x2 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

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**New Farmers.gov Conservation Concerns Tool Provides Customized Support for America’s Farmers and Ranchers**

Are you interested in keeping your working land productive for years to come? Use Natural Resources Conservation Service's new Conservation Concerns Tool to learn about conservation concerns that might impact your agricultural operation, then work with us on solutions targeted to fit your business needs. This tool is available now on our farmers.gov website, no login or account necessary.
With plain language and illustrative photos, the Conservation Concerns Tool provides a walkthrough of more than 40 conservation concerns related to soil, water, plants, animals, energy and air. Use the tool to create a list of resource concerns specific to your farm, ranch, or working forest lands, then download or print your list to share with NRCS staff at your local USDA Service Center.

We have a video available to walk you through the tool so you can see how it works.

The Conservation Concerns Tool is built to run on any modern browser such as Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or Safari and is fully functional on mobile devices. Whether you work from your desktop at home or your smartphone in the field, this new tool offers personalized conservation insights to meet the needs of 21st century agriculture. Visit farmers.gov/conserve to learn about additional USDA resources available for your working land.

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Farmers Help America Keep Soil Healthy

Our lives are dependent on healthy soil. Healthy soil gives us clean air and water, bountiful crops and forests, productive grazing lands, diverse wildlife and beautiful landscapes. It’s the reason why USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service experts are in your community and across the nation.

Soil is composed of air, water, organic matter and minerals. A community of organisms – functioning as a soil food web – lives all or parts of their lives in soil. More individual organisms are in a teaspoon of soil than there are people on earth. Increasing soil organic matter typically improves soil health, since organic matter improves several critical functions of soil.

To improve the health of their soil, more and more farmers and ranchers are keeping soil covered, reducing disturbance activities such as tilling, keeping plants growing throughout the year, and diversifying the crops they’re planting in a rotation. Taking these steps allow farmers and ranchers to help reduce erosion while increasing the soil’s ability to provide nutrients and water to the plant at critical times during the growing season.

When producers focus on improving soil health, they often have larger harvests, lower input costs, optimized nutrient use, and improved crop resilience during drought years like last year. In heavy rainfall years, healthy soil holds more water, reducing runoff that helps avert flooding downstream.

And because healthy soil allows for greater water infiltration and less erosion, nutrients and pesticides stay on the farm where they benefit crops, and are far less likely to be carried off the farm into streams and lakes where they can cause harm.

NRCS helps farmers install conservation practices such as cover crops to maintain and improve soil health – all of which can lead to productive, profitable and sustainable farming and ranching operations for generations to come. For more information, contact your Washakie County USDA Service Center at 307-347-2456 or visit nrcs.usda.gov.

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USDA
Washakie/Hot Springs Service Center