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Message from FSA CED Peggy Livingston

As the end of fiscal year 2021 rapidly approaches there are several program deadlines rapidly approaching:

- **2021 Acreage Reporting** – If you have not reported all acres on your farm/ranch, including cropland and rangeland, please contact the county office and make an appointment. At this point, if you have not notified the county office earlier to set up a time and date, you will be required to pay late file fees on each farm that you operate. **Without a current acreage report(s) on file, your eligibility for payments for 2021, cannot be processed.**

- **Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)**
  1. If you have harvested part, or all, of your NAP covered crops, please turn in your bale counts for each field along with a representative bale weight as soon as possible. You must report yield loss and unharvested fields **within 15 days** of when your loss becomes apparent.
  2. If you have experienced NAP covered grazing losses, please file a Notice of Loss and Application for Payment for grazing by **December 14, 2021**.
  3. **2022 NAP coverage** is available for purchase now. Deadline for fall seeded crops, permanently established hay crops, and grazed acres is **December 1, 2021** and the deadline for spring seeded crops is **April 1, 2022**.

- **Livestock Forage Program (LFP)** - Weston County, Campbell County, Converse County, and Crook County have all qualified to open LFP for the 2021 grazing season. The deadline to submit an Application for Payment and supporting documentation is **January 30, 2022**.

- **Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)** - Weston County has been approved to open ECP for the following flooding and drought practices:
  1. **EC1** – Removing Debris From Farmland (flooding)
  2. **EC2** – Grading, Shaping, Releveling, or Similar Measures (flooding)
  3. **EC3** – Restoring Permanent Fences (flooding) (**fire is pending**)  
  4. **EC4** – Restoring Conservation Structures and Other Installations
5. **EC6 - Drought Emergency Measures**

The signup runs from **August 2, 2021 through August 31, 2021**. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact the county office.

- **Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP)** - Weston County has qualified for program assistance through ELAP including grazing loss due to hailstorm(s), feed harvested or purchased that was damaged or destroyed by an eligible event such as flood or fire and/or additional cost of transporting water to eligible livestock. Notice of Loss needs filed **within 30 calendar days** of when the loss is first apparent. The deadline to submit an Application for Payment and supporting documentation is **January 30, 2022**.

I would like to take this opportunity to let everyone know I am retiring on August 27th. I have not taken this decision lightly, as all of you are very important to me and my resolve has always been to provide you with the best possible service. I want to thank all of you for your confidence in me. It has been an honor and one I will not soon forget. My personal life has now changed and with it is my desire to change directions. Doug and I are very much looking forward to spending our time together at home, enjoying our family, and finding the time to do those projects that have been on hold for so long. Thank you again Weston County producers, you will forever live in my heart and I wish you only the very best. **So, this is not goodbye, but rather “see you soon”**.

_Peggy_

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**WCNRD Special Meeting**

The Weston County Natural Resource District will hold a Special Meeting on August 24 at 3 pm to approve a grant submission to the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resources Trust Fund and to consider the submission of comments regards changes to the Water of the US rule. The meeting will be held via conference call. If you have any questions, please contact Caleb Cater at (307) 746-3264 extension 111.

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**Weston County FSA is Accepting Emergency Conservation Program Applications**

Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting applications in Weston County for the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) to address damages from two events: drought and flooding. ECP signup will begin on August 2, 2021 and run through the end of the month, ending on August 30, 2021.

The approved ECP practices include: EC1 Debris Removal; EC2 Grading, Shaping, Releveling; EC3 Fence; EC4 Restoring structures, wells, pipelines, tanks; and EC6 Drought Emergency Measures.

ECP helps you with the cost to restore the farmland to pre-disaster conditions. You may receive up to 75 percent of the cost of approved restoration activity. Limited resource, socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers and ranchers may receive up to 90 percent cost-share. A 25 percent advance payment will be allowed for repair or replacement of fencing. The payment limitation for ECP is $500,000 per disaster, and the funds are limited to activities to return the land to the relative pre-disaster condition.

You must apply for assistance prior to beginning reconstructive work. FSA’s National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and environmental compliance review process is required to be completed before any actions are taken. Submitting an application after reconstructive work has been completed may not qualify for ECP. Conservation concerns that were present on the land prior to the disaster are not eligible for ECP assistance.

FSA county committees will evaluate applications based on an on-site inspection of the damaged land, taking into consideration the type and extent of the damage. An on-site inspection does not guarantee that cost-share funding will be provided.
For those of you who expressed interest in the program and provided us information regarding your need, be aware you must complete the ECP application by August 31, 2021 to formally enroll in the program.

For more information on ECP, contact the Weston County USDA Service Center at 307-746-2701 extension 2 or visit farmers.gov/recover.

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**USDA Announces Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is providing up to $200 million to provide relief to timber harvesting and timber hauling businesses that have experienced losses due to COVID-19 as part of USDA's Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative. Loggers and truckers can apply for assistance through USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) **July 22 through Oct. 15, 2021**. The Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers program (PATHH) is administered by FSA in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, authorized this critical assistance for the timber industry. Timber harvesting and hauling businesses that have experienced a gross revenue loss of at least 10% during the period of Jan. 1 and Dec. 1, 2020, compared to the period of Jan. 1 and Dec. 1, 2019, are encouraged to apply.

**Program Details**

To be eligible for payments, individuals or legal entities must be a timber harvesting or timber hauling business where 50% or more of its gross revenue is derived from one or more of the following:

- Cutting timber.
- Transporting timber.
- Processing of wood on-site on the forest land (chipping, grinding, converting to biochar, cutting to smaller lengths, etc.).

Payments will be based on the applicant’s gross revenue received from Jan. 1, 2019, through Dec. 1, 2019, minus gross revenue received from Jan. 1, 2020, through Dec. 1, 2020, multiplied by 80%. FSA will issue an initial payment equal to the lesser of the calculated payment amount or $2,000 as applications are approved. A second payment will be made after the signup period has ended based upon remaining PATHH funds.

The maximum amount that a person or legal entity may receive directly is $125,000.

**Applying for Assistance**

Loggers and truckers can apply for PATHH beginning on July 22 by completing form FSA-1118, Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers Program application, and certifying to their gross revenue for 2019 and 2020 on the application. Additional documentation may be required. Visit farmers.gov/pathh for more information on how to apply.

Applications can be submitted to the FSA office at any USDA Service Center nationwide by mail, fax, hand delivery, or via electronic means. To find a local FSA office, loggers and truckers can visit farmers.gov/service-locator. They can also call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance.

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**Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybee, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)**
ELAP provides emergency assistance to eligible livestock, honeybee, and farm-raised fish producers who have losses due to disease, adverse weather or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires, not covered by other agricultural disaster assistance programs.

Eligible losses include:

- **Livestock** - grazing losses not covered under the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), loss of purchased feed and/or mechanically harvested feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, additional cost of transporting water because of an eligible drought and additional cost associated with gathering livestock to treat for cattle tick fever.

- **Honeybee** - loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, cost of additional feed purchased above normal quantities due to an eligible adverse weather condition, colony losses in excess of normal mortality due to an eligible weather event or loss condition, including CCD, and hive losses due to eligible adverse weather.

- **Farm-Raised Fish** - death losses in excess of normal mortality and/or loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event.

If you’ve suffered eligible livestock, honeybee, or farm-raised fish losses during calendar year 2021, you must file:

- A notice of loss within 30 calendar days after the loss is apparent (15 days for honeybee losses)
- An application for payment by January 30, 2022

For additional information about ELAP, contact the Weston County USDA Service Center at 307-746-2701 extension 2 or visit [fsa.usda.gov](http://fsa.usda.gov).

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**Weston County Fuel Mitigation**

As we watch a million acres burn across numerous Western states, we are reminded that wildfire is never more than a lightning strike away. If you live in the forest, your property is at risk. We can’t control lightning strikes, but by managing the vegetation and fuel loads on your property, we can greatly increase the survivability of your home and other structures in the event of a wildfire.

Weston County Natural Resource District can provide technical and financial assistance to landowners wishing to implement the following practices.

**Defensible Space**

Defensible Space around structures is a practice suitable and necessary for properties of any size. Defensible space is a multi-layered buffer around a structure that extends to 100 feet. Vegetation is managed as necessary to reduce the structure’s exposure to direct flames and radiant heat. This is the minimum amount of fuel mitigation that every structure in the forest should have. A few trees can be left as long as they are pruned to avoid torching and spaced far enough apart to prevent flames spreading from crown to crown. Grass needs to be mowed and scrubs should be far enough from the structure to not expose it to direct flames if the shrub were to catch fire. This space makes it safe for fire fighters to park an engine between the fire and your home.

**Fuel Treatment**

Fuel treatment is a practice suitable outside of the 100-foot defensible space zone. This zone remains forested, but trees are thinned to a minimum of 4 feet between crowns. Trees are pruned and heavy woody debris is removed from the forest floor. This reduces the likelihood of torching and inhibits the ability of flames to spread from crown to crown. In the event of an intense wildfire, this zone may still burn, but usually not as hot, and the flames are held to the ground. This practice does not necessarily have to be around a structure.

**Fuel Break**
Fuel breaks are typically placed along property boundaries, roads or ridgelines. A Fuel Break is a 100-200 ft.-wide strip of heavily thinned vegetation used to slow or even stop a wildfire. Like fuel treatment areas, fuel breaks are not necessarily clear-cut, trees can be left as long as they are pruned and maintain approximately 10-ft. crown spacing. A fuel break gives fire fighters a line to defend during an intense wildfire, but it may stop a low intensity fire on its own. The landowner has the benefit of predetermining the location of a fire line instead of a fire crew doing it in haste during an emergency.

The fuel mitigation needs of your property are determined by property size, topography, and vegetation type. A site visit from a forestry professional can improve the outcome of your efforts.

For technical assistance and more information about fuel mitigation, contact the Weston County Natural Resource District at 307-746-3264.

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.

UPCOMING DEADLINES & IMPORTANT DATES

- **August 24, 2021**: WCNRD Special Meeting held via conference call at 3pm
- **August 27, 2021**: CED Peggy Livingston’s last day in the office
- **August 30, 2021**: FSA closes ECP application enrollment
- **September 6, 2021**: Office closed for Labor Day
- **September 17, 2021**: FSA deadline to submit applications for the 2021 Pandemic Livestock Indemnity Program
- **October 11, 2021**: Office closed for Columbus Day
- **October 15, 2021**: FSA deadline to submit application for the 2021 Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers program
- **October 15, 2021**: Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers program

Also remember the following:

**NAP Notice of Loss** must be filed the earlier of 15 days of the disaster occurrence or when losses become apparent, or 15 days of the final harvest date.

**LIP Notice of Loss** must be filed 30 calendar days of when the loss is first apparent.

**Leases and/or Land Ownership changes including operational changes** must be reported within 30
calendar days of change to avoid late fees, repayment of funds issued and/or ineligibility for program participation. The deadline to submit changes for 2021 program year is August 1, 2021.

The Weston County USDA Service Center is now open to limited visitors by appointment only. Producers are encouraged to call ahead to schedule an appointment to ensure maximum use of your time and to ensure staff is available to tend to your important business needs. To contact your agency, use the information below.

Also, remember, visitors must wear masks in all USDA buildings regardless of vaccination status.
Pinnacle Bank in Newcastle until further notice
August 10, 2021