From Brenda’s Desk

It’s spring and planting has begun in parts of the county. Also, calving, and lambing season is in many stages from beginning to being almost complete. Included in this bulletin is an article about the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) which covers losses above normal mortality caused by adverse weather, some disease, and attacks by animals reintroduced or protected. If you have had any of these situations, please contact our office for further information and program eligibility.

Also, with shearing season in full swing wool and mohair producers are reminded to stop by our office to apply for your loan deficiency payments (LDP). Currently the LDP rate for wool is $.40 per pound and needs to be applied for before you lose beneficial interest in your wool. If you are delivering your wool to Center of the Nation you can either bring us a copy of your weight receipt or have them email it to us.

We do have sign up starting April 4, 2022, for the Grassland Conservation Reserve Program (CRP-Grasslands). This signup will run until May 13, 2022, and the payment per acre for Big Horn County is set at $14.00. If you have grassland that you would like to consider signing up for stop by our office for further information on this program.

Since Big Horn County is still in the D3 drought status and we are considered a 365-day grazing area we are eligible for the Livestock Forage Program (LFP). Software is not open yet to begin signups, but we have been told it will open sometime in April. Watch future correspondence for signup details.

Also, crop reporting is just around the corner so remember to keep track of your planting dates. Once all your crops are planted stop by and complete your reporting, you don’t have to wait for July to complete these. We do plan to have Lovell reporting days again this year by appointment and will keep you posted as the time gets closer.

Wishing you all a safe planting, calving, and lambing season. We are always here to serve your agricultural needs.

Disaster Assistance Available for Livestock Losses

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides assistance to you for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by adverse weather, disease and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law.

For disease losses, FSA county committees can accept veterinarian certifications that livestock deaths were directly related to adverse weather and unpreventable through good animal husbandry and management.
For 2022 livestock losses, you must file a notice within 30 calendar days of when the loss is first apparent. You then must provide the following supporting documentation to your local FSA office no later than 60 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the eligible loss condition occurred.

- Proof of death documentation
- Copy of grower’s contracts
- Proof of normal mortality documentation

USDA has established normal mortality rates for each type and weight range of eligible livestock, i.e. Adult Beef Cow = 2% and Non-Adult Beef Cattle (less than 250 pounds) = 4.3%. These established percentages reflect losses that are considered expected or typical under “normal” conditions.

In addition to filing a notice of loss, you must also submit an application for payment by March 1, 2023.

For more information, contact the Big Horn County USDA Service Center at (307)765-2689 Ext 2 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

**Wool Triggers Loan Deficiency Payment in Big Horn County**

If you have wool in Big Horn County, you may be eligible for loan deficiency payments (LDPs) from the USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA).

LDPs and marketing assistance loans (MALs) are marketing tools that are available during shearing.

MALs help producers meet cash flow needs without selling commodities when market prices are at harvest-time lows. Producers who are eligible for marketing loans, but choose to forgo the loan, are eligible for LDPs if the posted county price falls below the county loan rate.

Producers can purchase a commodity certificate that may be exchanged for the outstanding loan collateral. Daily LDP rates are available online at fsa.usda.gov.

Rules related to payment limitations, actively engaged in farming and cash-rent tenant no longer apply to LDPs.

For more information, contact your Big Horn County USDA Service Center at (307)765-2689 Ext 2 or visit fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport.

**USDA Announces Conservation Reserve Program Signups for 2022**

Agricultural producers and landowners can sign up soon for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), a cornerstone conservation program offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and a key tool in the Biden-Harris Administration effort to address climate change and achieve other natural resource benefits. The General CRP signup will run from Jan. 31 to March 11, and the Grassland CRP signup will run from April 4 to May 13.

Producers and landowners enrolled 4.6 million acres into CRP signups in 2021, including 2.5 million acres in the largest Grassland CRP signup in history. There are currently 22.1 million acres enrolled, and FSA is aiming to reach the 25.5-million-acre cap statutorily set for fiscal year 2022.

**CRP Signups**

General CRP helps producers and landowners establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees, to control soil erosion, improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat on cropland.

Meanwhile, Grassland CRP is a working lands program, helping landowners and operators protect grassland, including rangeland and pastureland and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as working grazing lands.
Protecting grasslands contributes positively to the economy of many regions, provides biodiversity of plant and animal populations and provides important carbon sequestration benefits to deliver lasting climate outcomes.

Alongside these programs, producers and landowners can enroll acres in Continuous CRP under the ongoing sign up, which includes projects available through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE).

**Climate Benefits**

Last year, FSA enacted a Climate-Smart Practice Incentive for CRP General and Continuous signups, to better target CRP on addressing climate change. This incentive aims to increase carbon sequestration and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. CRP’s climate-smart practices include establishment of trees and permanent grasses, development of wildlife habitat and wetland restoration. The Climate-Smart Practice Incentive is annual, and the amount is based on the benefits of each practice type.

Additionally, in order to better target the program toward climate outcomes, USDA invested $10 million last year in the CRP Monitoring, Assessment and Evaluation (MAE) program to measure and monitor the soil carbon and climate resilience impacts of conservation practices over the life of new CRP contracts. This will enable the agency to further refine the program and practices to provide producers tools for increased climate resilience.

**More Information on CRP**

Landowners and producers interested in CRP should contact their local USDA Service Center to learn more or to apply for the program -- for General CRP before the **March 11 deadline**, and for Grassland CRP before the **May 13 deadline**. Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. Due to the pandemic, some USDA Service Centers are open to limited visitors. Additionally, fact sheets and other resources are available at fsa.usda.gov/crp.

Signed into law in 1985, CRP is one of the largest voluntary private-lands conservation programs in the United States. It was originally intended to primarily control soil erosion and potentially stabilize commodity prices by taking marginal lands out of production. The program has evolved over the years, providing many conservation and economic benefits.

**FSA Offers Joint Financing Option on Direct Farm Ownership Loans**

The USDA Farm Service Agency’s (FSA) Direct Farm Ownership loans can 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.

Joint financing allows FSA to provide more farmers and ranchers with access to capital. FSA lends up to 50 percent of the total amount financed. A commercial lender, a State program or the seller of the property being purchased, provides the balance of loan funds, with or without an FSA guarantee. The maximum loan amount for a joint financing loan is $600,000, and the repayment period for the loan is up to 40 years.

The operation must be an eligible farm enterprise. Farm Ownership loan funds cannot be used to finance nonfarm enterprises and all applicants must be able to meet general eligibility requirements. Loan applicants are also required to have participated in the business operations of a farm or ranch for at least three years out of the 10 years prior to the date the application is submitted. The applicant must show documentation that their participation in the business operation of the farm or ranch was not solely as a laborer.

For more information about farm loans, contact your Big Horn County USDA Service Center at (307)765-2689 Ext 2 or visit fsa.usda.gov.
Conservation Agricultural Mentoring Program

The Conservation Agricultural Mentoring Program is a state-driven program that matches an experienced producer who is passionate about conservation with an NRCS field employee that is new to the job or new to the area.

Our goal through the program is to grow critical relationships with the producers we serve, while at the same time advancing employee knowledge of production agriculture and natural resources in their local area, ultimately enhancing our ability to provide excellent customer service.

Once matched with a producer mentor, the employee will go out on the land with them 6-12 times per year for a period of 12-18 months – always during agreed upon times that are convenient for the producer.

Producer mentors provide a safe, low-risk learning environment for employees to advance their knowledge of:

- Common agricultural practices, equipment, inputs and other topics.
- The types of daily challenges and decisions producers face.
- Local resource problems and concerns.
- How producers use conservation practices to address resource concerns.

For more information on the CAMP program, check out our Fact Sheet and Frequently Asked Questions. Contact your local CAMP Coordinator to speak with someone directly or to sign-up to become a mentor.

WaterSMART – Moncur Lateral Irrigation Area

NRCS is now accepting application for a second round of funding for irrigation projects on lands that are irrigated under the Moncur Lateral in the Lovell area. If you have a project you are interested in installing and would like funding assistance, please submit your application by April 15th to the Lovell office. To pick up an application or if you have questions, please call Laura at (307) 696-3463 or drop by the Lovell office at 259 Nevada Ave., Monday – Wednesday.

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