

**December
2021**



**Park County Farm
Service Agency**

1017 Highway 14A
Powell, WY 82435

Phone: 307-754-9411
Fax: 855-415-3438

Office Hours:
8:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.
Monday—Friday

County Executive Director:
Darla Rhodes

Program Technicians:
Tanya Butz
Jessica Shuler

Farm Loan:
Tom Schambow
Nick Hartley

County Committee:
Emily Karst—Chairperson
Tim Acord —Vice-chairperson
Lynn George —Member
Next Committee Meeting:
April 13, 2022

County Office Message

From Darla's Desk...



Happy spring to the Park County farmers and ranchers! We received a little bit of moisture, but definitely not enough to get us out of this ongoing drought! I hope you are all doing your rain dance! With that being said, Park County has once again qualified for the Emergency Livestock Assistance Program and Livestock Forage Program. Software will not be open until April, but please remember to keep your records up to date and document everything! (Please see related articles.)

With lambing and calving in full swing, please remember the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides benefits for eligible livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by eligible loss conditions, including eligible adverse weather, eligible disease and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law. You must file a notice of loss within 30 calendar days of when the loss is first apparent.

With planting starting for a lot of our producers, I'd like to remind everyone to keep track of their planting dates. These dates are needed at both the FSA office and your insurance office. If you do not plan on seeding or re-seeding anything for crop year 2022, please call the office and set up an appointment to report your acreage/crops. The deadline to report acreage for crop year 2022 is July 15th.

If you have made changes to your banking information, address, phone number, land that you own, operate and/or lease, please report those changes to the office as soon as possible so that we may update that information and keep your records current.

Also, just a friendly reminder to the producers that received a Quality Loss Assistance Program (QLA) and/or Wild-fire and Hurricane Indemnity Program (WHIP+), you will be required to meet your insurance linkage for 2022 and 2023. If you are unsure of the linkage requirements you need to meet, please call our office for assistance.

Disaster Assistance for 2022 Livestock Forage Losses

Producers in Park County will be eligible to apply for 2022 Livestock Forage Disaster (LFP) Program benefits on Native Pasture starting in April.

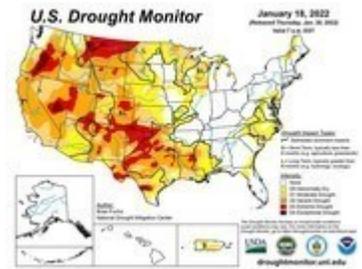
LFP provides compensation if you suffer grazing losses for covered livestock due to drought on privately owned or cash leased land, or fire on federally managed land.

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 31, 2023, for 2022 losses.

For additional information about LFP, including eligible livestock and fire criteria, contact the Park County FSA Office at 307-754-9411.



Five Facts About the United States Drought Monitor



This is likely no surprise to you, but drought persists across the western U.S. and is intensifying in some areas. No geographic area is immune to the potential of drought at any given time. The [U.S. Drought Monitor](#) provides a weekly drought assessment, and it plays an important role in USDA programs that help farmers and ranchers recover from drought.

Fact #1 - Numerous agencies use the Drought Monitor to inform drought-related decisions.

The map identifies areas of drought and labels them by intensity on a weekly basis. It categorizes the entire country as being in one of six levels of drought. The first two, None and Abnormally Dry (D0), are not considered to be drought. The next four describe increasing levels of drought: Moderate (D1), Severe (D2), Extreme (D3) and Exceptional (D4).

While many entities consult the Drought Monitor for drought information, drought declarations are made by federal, [state](#) and local agencies that may or may not use the Drought Monitor to inform their decisions. Some of the ways USDA uses it to determine a producer's eligibility for certain [drought assistance programs](#), like the [Livestock Forage Disaster Program](#) and [Emergency Haying or Grazing on Conservation Reserve Program acres](#) and to "fast-track" [Secretarial drought disaster designations](#).

Fact #2 - U.S. Drought Monitor is made with more than precipitation data.

When you think about drought, you probably think about water, or the lack of it. Precipitation plays a major role in the creation of the Drought Monitor, but the map's author considers [numerous indicators](#), including [drought impacts](#) and local insight from over 450 expert observers around the country. Authors use several dozen indicators to assess drought, including precipitation, stream-flow, reservoir levels, temperature and evaporative demand, soil moisture and vegetation health. Because the drought monitor depicts both short and long-term drought conditions, the authors must look at data for multiple timeframes. The final map produced each week represents a summary of the story being told by all the pieces of data. To help tell that story, authors don't just look at data. They converse over the course of the map-making week with experts across the country and draw information about drought impacts from media reports and private citizens.

Fact #3 - A real person, using real data, updates the map.

Each week's map author, not a computer, processes and analyzes data to update the drought monitor. The [map authors](#) are trained climatologists or meteorologists from the National Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (the academic partner and website host of the Drought Monitor), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and USDA. The author's job is to do what a computer can't – use their expertise to reconcile the sometimes-conflicting stories told by each stream of data into a single assessment.

Fact #4 - The Drought Monitor provides a current snapshot, not a forecast.

The Drought Monitor is a "snapshot" of conditions observed during the most recent week and builds off the previous week's map. The map is released on Thursdays and depicts conditions based on data for the week that ended the preceding Tuesday. Rain that falls on the Wednesday just before the USDM's release won't be reflected until the next map is published. This provides a consistent, week-to-week product and gives the author a window to assess the data and come up with a final map.

Fact #5 – Your input can be part of the drought-monitoring process.

State climatologists and other trained observers in the drought monitoring network relay on-the-ground information from numerous sources to the US Drought monitor author each week. That can include information that you contribute.

The Drought Monitor serves as a trigger for multiple forms of federal disaster relief for agricultural producers, and sometimes producers contact the author to suggest that drought conditions in their area are worse than what the latest drought monitor shows. When the author gets a call like that, it prompts them to look closely at all available data for that area, to see whether measurements of precipitation, temperature, soil moisture and other indicators corroborate producer-submitted reports. This is the process that authors follow whether they receive one report or one hundred reports, although reports from more points may help state officials and others know where to look for impacts.

There are multiple ways to contribute your observations:

- **Talk to your state climatologist** - Find the current list at the [American Association of State Climatologists](#) website.
- **Email** - Emails sent to droughtmonitor@unl.edu inform the USDM authors.
- **Become a CoCoRaHS observer** - Submit drought reports along with daily precipitation observations to the [Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network](#).
- **Submit Condition Monitoring Observer Reports (CMOR)** - go.unl.edu/CMOR.

For more information, read our [Ask the Expert blog with a NDMC climatologist](#) or visit farmers.gov/protection-recovery.

USDA Expands Assistance to Cover Feed Transportation Costs for Drought-Impacted Ranchers

In response to the severe drought conditions in the West and Great Plains, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced today its plans to help cover the cost of transporting feed for livestock that rely on grazing. USDA is updating the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program \(ELAP\)](#) to immediately cover feed transportation costs for drought impacted ranchers. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will provide more details and tools to help ranchers get ready to apply at their local USDA Service Center later this month at fsa.usda.gov/elap.

ELAP provides financial assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees, and farm-raised fish for losses due to disease, certain adverse weather events or loss conditions as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture.

ELAP already covers the cost of hauling water during drought, and this change will expand the program beginning in 2021 to cover feed transportation costs where grazing and hay resources have been depleted. This includes places where:

Drought intensity is D2 for eight consecutive weeks as indicated by the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#);

- Drought intensity is D3 or greater; or

USDA has determined a shortage of local or regional feed availability.

Cost share assistance will also be made available to cover eligible cost of treating hay or feed to prevent the spread of invasive pests like fire ants.

Under the revised policy for feed transportation cost assistance, eligible ranchers will be reimbursed 60% of feed transportation costs above what would have been incurred in a normal year. Producers qualifying as underserved (socially disadvantaged, limited resource, beginning or military veteran) will be reimbursed for 90% of the feed transportation cost. above what would have been incurred in a normal year.

A national cost formula, as established by USDA, will be used to determine reimbursement costs which will not include the first 25 miles and distances exceeding 1,000 transportation miles. The calculation will also exclude the normal cost to transport hay or feed if the producer normally purchases some feed.

To be eligible for ELAP assistance, livestock must be intended for grazing and producers must have incurred feed transportation costs on or after January 1, 2022. Although producers will self-certify losses and expenses to FSA, producers are encouraged to maintain good records and retain receipts and related documentation in the event these documents are requested for review by the local FSA County Committee. The deadline to file an application for payment for the 2022 program year is January 31, 2023. The Park County office will not start taking applications until April 2022.

USDA offers a comprehensive portfolio of disaster assistance programs. On farmers.gov, the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster Assistance-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#), and [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#) can help producers and landowners determine all program or loan options available for disaster recovery assistance.

More information on this expansion to ELAP is forthcoming. In the meantime, more information is available at fsa.usda.gov/elap or by contacting the Park County FSA at 307-754-9411.

Grassland CRP Signup

The Grassland Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is part of the CRP program, a federally funded voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so that environmentally sensitive agricultural land is not farmed or ranched, but instead used for conservation benefits. FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is 10 or 15 years.

Grassland CRP helps landowners and operators protect grassland, including rangeland, and pastureland, and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as grazing lands.

The program emphasizes support for grazing operations, plant and animal biodiversity, and grassland and land containing shrubs and forbs under the greatest threat of conversion. Grassland CRP is reauthorized by the 2018 Farm Bill.

The Grassland CRP signup runs from **April 4, 2022 to May 13, 2022**.

**USDA Farm Service Agency
Park County FSA Office
1017 Highway 14A
Powell, WY 82435**

Submit Loan Requests for Financing Early

Farm Service Agency is already working on operating loans for spring 2022 and asks potential borrowers to submit their requests early so they can be timely processed. The farm loan team can help determine which loan programs are best for applicants.

FSA offers a wide range of low-interest loans that can meet the financial needs of any farm operation for just about any purpose. The traditional farm operating and farm ownership loans can help large and small farm operations take advantage of early purchasing discounts for spring inputs as well expenses throughout the year.

Microloans are a simplified loan program that will provide up to \$50,000 for both Farm Ownership and Operating Microloans to eligible applicants. These loans, targeted for smaller and non-traditional operations, can be used for operating expenses, starting a new operation, purchasing equipment, and other needs associated with a farming operation. Loans to beginning farmers and members of under-served groups are a priority.

Other types of loans available include:

Marketing Assistance Loans allow producers to use eligible commodities as loan collateral and obtain a 9-month loan while the crop is in storage. These loans provide cash flow to the producer and allow them to market the crop when prices may be more advantageous.

Farm Storage Facility Loans can be used to build permanent structures used to store eligible commodities, for storage and handling trucks, or portable or permanent handling equipment. A variety of structures are eligible under this loan, including bunker silos, grain bins, hay storage structures, and refrigerated structures for vegetables and fruit. A producer may borrow up to \$500,000 per loan.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting should contact Darla Rhodes at 307-754-9411 extension 2 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.