Rebecca’s Recap

We have finally received some snow since last we met and what a welcome sight it is. Sweetwater and Sublette County are in D3 according to the National Drought Monitor. If you are not already reporting the moisture levels for your area or lack of moisture to the National Drought Monitor, we encourage you to report and help our counties have better and more accurate moisture representation. Our disaster programs hinge on the National Drought Monitor and whether we qualify for disaster programs.

Beat the rush...... If you do not plan on seeding or reseeding anything for crop year 2022 call our office at 307-362-3062 ext. 2 to set up an appointment to report your acreage/crops. Deadline to report acreage for crop year 2022 is July 15.

If you have had 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.

Important Dates:

ARCPLC signup deadline is 3/15/2022.

NAP deadline for Spring seeded crops is 4/1/2022.

CRP Grasslands signup will start on 4/4/2022 and end on 5/13/2022.

Report weather related livestock losses within 30 days from when the loss was apparent and within 15 days if the loss involves honeybees. NAP crop losses need to be reported to our office within 15 days as well. It is important for losses to be reported timely so that you remain eligible for a payment if one triggers.

Stay safe, healthy, and warm.

Until next time.

Wool Triggers Loan Deficiency Payment in Sublette & Sweetwater County

If you grow Wool in Sublette and/or Sweetwater 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 harvest (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 the Sweetwater/Sublette County USDA Service Center at 307-362-3062 or visit fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport.

**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 Farm Loan Program USDA Service Center at (307) 856-7524 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

**Making Your Land More Resilient to Drought**

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service can help you conserve water and build resilience to drought, through conservation practices that improve irrigation efficiency, boost soil health, and manage grazing lands.

**Irrigation Efficiency**

USDA helps you improve your irrigation efficiency to ensure each drop of water is used wisely. Saving water on your farm can help during drought and can offset rising water costs; reduce expenditures for energy, chemicals, and labor; and enhance revenues through higher crop yields and improved crop quality. Funded conservation practices include
conversion to more efficient irrigation systems, such as micro-irrigation or subsurface drip irrigation, installation of irrigation pipeline, irrigation water management, structures for water control, and flow meters. Tools like drip irrigation, which provides water precisely where and when it’s needed, can achieve greater precision with flow meters and soil moisture sensors.

Soil Health

In addition, soil health conservation practices, such as reduced- or no-till, cover crops, mulching and residue management can help to make your soil, and the plants you grow or animals you raise, healthier. Healthier soil can absorb and retain more water for longer periods of time, making your farm or ranch more resilient to drought. Using soil health practices, you can conserve water by increasing your soil’s water-holding capacity and use conservation tillage to keep the ground covered, reducing water loss through transpiration and evaporation.

And soil health practices increase organic matter, and each pound of organic matter can hold up to 20 pounds of water. Every 1% increase in organic matter results in as much as 25,000 gallons of soil water per acre. Each 1% increase in organic matter can also provide up to 30 pounds of more available nitrogen per acre. That means less money and time spent on inputs like water and fertilizer, which make your operation more profitable.

Rotational/Prescribed Grazing, Water Sources for Livestock

Drought also impacts grazing lands, and NRCS works with you to increase the resilience of your livestock operation. Ranchers can adapt to dry conditions in two main ways: increasing the availability and suitability of forage and ensuring that cattle have an adequate and reliable source of water. For forage, rotational or prescribed grazing (rotating cattle among pastures) can relieve pressure on stressed vegetation and ensure a more consistent supply of forage for animals. NRCS conservationists can also work with you to plant more drought-tolerant forage species, plants best suited to local soils and conditions. For reliable sources of water, NRCS can help you with installing watering facilities, water wells, or water pipeline for livestock. Having available forage and water for livestock can make a big difference in difficult drought conditions.

USDA and NRCS are here for you, helping you recover from drought and prepare for the next one. For more information on drought recovery assistance at [https://www.farmers.gov/protection-recovery/drought#recovery](https://www.farmers.gov/protection-recovery/drought#recovery). For more information on conservation practices to make your operation more resilient to drought in future years, go to [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov).

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**Producers with Crop Insurance to Receive Premium Benefit for Cover Crops**

Agricultural producers who have coverage under most crop insurance policies are eligible for a premium benefit from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) if they planted cover crops during the 2022 crop year. To receive the benefit from this year’s Pandemic Cover Crop Program (PCCP), producers must report cover crop acreage by March 15, 2022. The new program comes on the heels of the recently announced Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities which creates market opportunities for U.S. agricultural and forestry products that use climate-smart production practices and include innovative, cost-effective ways to measure and verify greenhouse gas benefits.

PCCP, offered by USDA’s Risk Management Agency (RMA), helps farmers maintain their cover crop systems, despite the financial challenges posed by the pandemic and is part of USDA’s Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative, a bundle of programs to bring financial assistance to farmers, ranchers and producers who felt the impact of COVID-19 market disruptions.

PCCP was first offered in 2021, and producers with crop insurance received $59.5 million in premium subsidies for 12.2 million acres of cover crops.

**About the Premium Benefit**

PCCP provides premium support to producers who insured their crop with most insurance policies and planted a qualifying cover crop during the 2022 crop year. The premium support is $5 per acre, but no more than the full premium amount owed.
Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa have existing programs for producers to receive a premium benefit for planting cover crops. In these states, participating producers will receive an additional benefit.

All cover crops reportable to FSA are eligible and include cereals and other grasses, legumes, brassicas and other non-legume broadleaves, and mixtures of two or more cover crop species planted at the same time.

To receive the benefit for this program, producers must file a Report of Acreage form (FSA-578) for cover crops with USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) by March 15, 2022. The cover crop fields reported on the Report of Acreage form must match what the producer reported to their insurance company for crop insurance policies. To file the form, producers must contact and make an appointment with their local USDA Service Center.

Additional PCCP Details

Certain policies are not eligible because they have underlying coverage, which would already receive the benefit or are not designed to be reported in a manner consistent with the Report of Acreage form (FSA-578). PCCP is not available for Enhanced Coverage Option, Hurricane Insurance Protection – Wind Index, Post-Application Coverage Endorsement and Supplemental Coverage Option. Stacked Income Protection (STAX) and Margin Protection (MP) policies are only eligible for PCCP when insured as a standalone policy. STAX and MP endorsements to underlying policies are not eligible for PCCP.

PCCP does not change acreage reporting dates, reporting requirements, or any other terms of the crop insurance policy.

The Rule can now be viewed in the Federal Register. More information, including frequently asked questions, can be found at farmers.gov/pandemic-assistance/cover-crops.

Additional Pandemic Assistance

PCCP is part of USDA’s broader response to the COVID-19 pandemic. RMA also extended a number of crop insurance flexibilities to Approved Insurance Providers (AIPs) and agricultural producers until June 30, 2022 or later. Originally, these flexibilities were expiring in January. Additionally, USDA’s Pandemic Assistance for Producers has provided additional support for producers, by improving and retargeting existing programs and creating new efforts to reach a broader set of producers like PCCP.

Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers and online at the RMA Agent Locator. Learn more about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net at rma.usda.gov.
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County Committee Members for Sweetwater/Sublette:
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Shelby Arambel - Sublette
Bob Slagowski - Sweetwater
Bonnie Hueckstaedt - Sweetwater

Next County Committee Meeting:
April 27, 2022 at 2:00pm

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