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## Important Updates

### New Baby!

Our most important and exciting update in the Sweetwater/Sublette County Office this month, was welcoming Sadie's new baby Gabriel on the 16th! We also welcomed a new program technician, Christina Reynolds, early this month. On that note, please direct all office related correspondence to Christina or I until Sadie returns.

### Local Events:

**Public Meeting - Lyman - Critical Aging Irrigation Infrastructure Assessment - Opportunities for area landowners, ranchers, and farmers** - The Wyoming Water Development Office (WWDO) invites all landowners, irrigators, stakeholders, and interested public to attend a project meeting concerning the assessment of critical aging irrigation infrastructure in the area. Recent failures of critical irrigation infrastructure in the State have highlighted the need to discover imminent failures before they occur.

Join us to learn more about the State of Wyoming's Critical Aging Irrigation Infrastructure project. Representatives of State and Federal agencies will also be on hand, as available, to discuss additional funding opportunities for resource related projects.

When: Tuesday, October 11, 2022

Where: Uinta County Conservation District Office  
204 East Sage St., Lyman, WY 82937

Meeting details can be found at:

[https://wwdc.state.wy.us/critical\\_infrastructure/CAII.html](https://wwdc.state.wy.us/critical_infrastructure/CAII.html)

For more information, please contact:

Chace Tavelli; Project Manager, Wyoming Water Development Office  
307-777-7626 [chace.tavelli@wyo.gov](mailto:chace.tavelli@wyo.gov)

Jay Schug; Trihydro Corporation  
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## Change to Policy on Filing a Notice of Loss for Grazed Forage Producers with NAP Coverage

For the 2022 crop year, NAP forage producers with the intended use of grazing who elect to use independent assessments or other approved alternative loss percentage methods to establish their loss are no longer required to file a CCC-576 Notice of Loss with FSA. However, a CCC-576 Application for Payment form must be submitted to FSA no later than 60 calendar days after the coverage period ends. If an independent assessment is used to determine the loss, producers have 180 days to file an application for payment.

Producers that elect to have the grazing loss determined using similar mechanically harvested units still must timely file a CCC-576 Notice of Loss within 15 days of the disaster event or damage to the crop first becomes apparent or within 15 days of harvest.

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## Applying for Farm Storage Facility Loans

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The Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program provides low-interest financing to help you build or upgrade storage facilities and to purchase portable (new or used) structures, equipment and storage and handling trucks.

Eligible commodities include corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley, minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain, pulse crops (lentils, chickpeas and dry peas), hay, honey, renewable biomass, fruits, nuts and vegetables for cold storage facilities, floriculture, hops, maple sap, rye, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, meat and poultry (unprocessed), eggs, and aquaculture (excluding systems that maintain live animals through uptake and discharge of water). Qualified facilities include grain bins, hay barns and cold storage facilities for eligible commodities.

Loans up to \$50,000 can be secured by a promissory note/security agreement, loans between \$50,000 and \$100,000 may require additional security, and loans exceeding \$100,000 require additional security.

You do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply. The loans are designed to assist a diverse range of farming operations, including small and mid-sized businesses, new farmers, operations supplying local food and farmers markets, non-traditional farm products, and underserved producers.

For more information, contact your Sweetwater/Sublette County USDA Service Center at 307-362-3062 or visit [fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport](https://fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport).

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## 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 Sweetwater/Sublette County USDA Service Center at 307-362-3062 or visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov).

## Cover Crops Play a Starring Role in Climate Change Mitigation

On your own land, you've probably seen evidence that climate change is happening – things like extreme weather events or changes in growing seasons over the years. America's rural communities are on the frontlines of climate change, and now is the time for agriculture, forestry, and rural communities to act.

There are various ways to help mitigate the effects of climate change on your land and improve your bottom line at the same time. One very effective way is by planting cover crops.

Cover crops offer agricultural producers a natural and inexpensive climate solution through their ability to capture atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO<sup>2</sup>) into soils. But cover crops don't just remove CO<sup>2</sup> from the atmosphere, they also help make your soil healthier and your crops more resilient to a changing climate.

Healthy soil has better water infiltration and water holding capacity and is less susceptible to erosion from wind and water.

Cover crops also trap excess nitrogen – keeping it from leaching into groundwater or running off into surface water – releasing it later to feed growing crops. This saves you money on inputs like water and fertilizer and makes your crops more able to survive in harsh conditions.

### USDA's Cover Crop Support

During the past year, USDA has made a number of strides to encourage use of cover crops. Earlier this month, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) formed a [new partnership with Farmers For Soil Health](#). We also launched a new Cover Crop Initiative in 11 states through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), targeted \$38 million to help producers mitigate climate change through adoption of cover crops.

In fiscal 2021, NRCS provided technical and financial assistance to help producers plant 2.3 million acres of cover crops through EQIP.

We've also recognized the importance of supporting cover crops through crop insurance. USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) recently provided \$59.5 million in premium support for producers who planted cover crops on 12.2 million acres through the new [Pandemic Cover Crop Program](#). Additionally, RMA recently updated policy to allow producers with crop insurance to [hay, graze or chop cover crops](#) at any time and still receive 100% of the prevented planting payment. This policy change supports use of cover crops, which can help producers build resilience to drought. [Visit RMA's Conservation webpage to learn more.](#)

Working together, we can lead the way through climate-smart solutions that will improve the profitability and resilience of producers and foresters, open new market opportunities, and build wealth that stays in rural communities. Our support for cover crops are part of a much broader effort at USDA to address climate change. To learn more, read [USDA's January 18, 2022 news release](#).

Cover crops are not only good for rural communities, but also for urban areas. Late last year, the [NRCS National Plant Materials Center](#) planted cover crops in the urban garden in front of USDA's Washington, D.C. Headquarters. See how cover crops are also great for the urban farmer or backyard gardener.

To learn more, visit [farmers.gov/conserve/soil-health](https://farmers.gov/conserve/soil-health), watch our Conservation at Work video on cover crops, or contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

## USDA Commits to Big Game Conservation Partnership with the State of Wyoming: Initial Investments Forthcoming

USDA announced a new partnership that uses diverse Farm Bill investments to support voluntary conservation of private working lands and migratory big game populations in Wyoming. Using lessons learned from this pilot, USDA seeks to scale up this model across the West as part of President Biden's commitment to support voluntary, locally-led conservation efforts to reach the administration's national conservation goals.

USDA participated in extensive engagement and listening sessions with stakeholders throughout Wyoming and developed this pilot in response to their feedback. Those listening sessions helped guide the project's concepts and principles: recognition of the large scale of this issue in key landscapes, coordination with state agencies, consistency with state policy and direction and support of existing partnerships wherever possible.

The pilot will take a systems approach to voluntary conservation and draw on several USDA programs, including the [Grassland Conservation Reserve Program](#) (Grassland CRP), [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP), the [Regional Conservation Partnership Program](#) (RCPP) and the [Agricultural Conservation Easements Program](#) (ACEP) to provide financial and technical assistance for landowners who want to participate. USDA is committing an initial \$15 million in investment through EQIP and ACEP for Wyoming, in addition to the rental payments that will go to producers who enroll in Grasslands CRP. There are three distinct conservation areas that USDA will invest in using these voluntary and incentive-based programs. All are designed to help willing landowners and their partners conserve private lands for the benefit of migratory big game populations. They include:

- **Agricultural Land Protection** – Preventing the conversion of private working lands that provide habitat and other values for migratory big game populations to alternative land uses not compatible with big game migrations. Specifically, this would include preventing actions like residential subdivision, mining and development of commercial wind and solar facilities on private lands. Additional resources will be provided to Wyoming for Agricultural Land Easements through the ACEP (ACEP-ALE) for this effort, as well as prioritization of big game conservation through RCPP.
- **Restoration, Enhancement and Management** – Restoring and managing working lands to provide a variety of healthy habitats migrating animals need to meet their life history requirements. Habitat quality can be improved in many ways including but not limited to the control of invasive species, restoration of degraded aspens, removal of encroached woodlands and restoration of wet meadows. Ensuring compatibility with fences used for managing working lands and migrating animals is also a top priority. Today, USDA is announcing an additional \$5 million in FY22 resources through the EQIP for Wyoming to specifically support these needs. These resources are a significant addition to the State's current FY22 EQIP allocation of over \$16 million.
- **Conservation Leases** - Managing working lands in a way that ensures the resiliency of the desired habitat conditions is extremely important to migrating big game as they rely upon healthy lands to meet their diverse seasonal habitat needs. Providing annual financial incentives to landowners through a conservation lease can help encourage the long-term management that results in resiliency. The 10- to 15-year contracts through the Grassland CRP are being used to fulfill this need. To date, USDA has committed \$32.3 million (\$2.3 million paid to landowners annually) to conserve over 170,000 acres through Grassland CRP in Wyoming with additional enrollments to be announced from this year's signup in the coming weeks. For this year's signup, USDA piloted policy changes to make it easier for producers to access multiple programs. USDA will continue to work with partners to tailor the program to meet the state's needs before next year's signup.

For more information, landowners can contact USDA at their local [USDA Service Center](#). On farmers.gov, landowners can [create a secure account](#), apply for NRCS programs, electronically sign documents and manage their conservation contracts.

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## Apply for Livestock Forage Losses

Producers are eligible to apply for 2022 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) benefits.

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 30, 2023, for 2022 losses.

For additional information about LFP, including eligible livestock and fire criteria, contact your Sweetwater/Sublette County USDA Service Center at 307-362-3062 or visit [fsa.usda.gov](https://fsa.usda.gov).

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### USDA Service Center

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79 Winston Dr., Ste. 110  
Rock Springs, WY 82901-5794

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#### Program Technician:

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#### Program Technician:

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#### County Committee Members for Sweetwater/Sublette:

Dave Pape - Sublette  
Shelby Arambel - Sublette  
Bob Slagowski - Sweetwater  
Bonnie Hueckstaedt - Sweetwater

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