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## From Brenda's Desk

November is a time of Thanksgiving, and we here at the Big Horn County Farm Service Agency are thankful for all our ag producers that we have had the pleasure of serving this past year. You all make our job so much more enjoyable. Here are just a few reminders for the end of the year:



- County Committee Election for Local Administrative Area-1, the North end of the county starting at sheep mountain, is holding their election this year. Producers in that area of the county should start seeing your ballots in the mail. Please complete those and mail the to the office by **December 4, 2023**.
- If you want coverage on your biannual and perennial crops or honey the deadline to purchase your Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) is **December 1, 2023**. If you have completed a Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification (form CCC-860) with FSA, it may serve as an application for basic coverage for all eligible crops beginning with crop year 2022. These producers will have all NAP-related service fees for basic coverage waived. These producers may also receive a 50% premium reduction if higher levels of coverage are elected on form CCC-471
- Producers should have started receiving prefilled applications for the Emergency Relief Program (ERP) 2022 in the mail. Check out the article below for more information on this program and signups.

### Important Dates:

November 23, 2023 – Office Closed for Thanksgiving

December 1, 2023 – NAP fall crop deadline

December 4, 2023 – Election ballot deadline

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## FSA Encourages Farmers and Ranchers to Vote in County Committee Elections

The 2023 Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections will begin on Nov. 6, 2023, when ballots are mailed to eligible voters. The deadline to return ballots to local FSA offices, or to be postmarked, is Dec. 4, 2023.

County committee members are an important component of the operations of FSA and provide a link between the agricultural community and USDA. Farmers and ranchers



elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity price support programs; conservation programs; incentive, indemnity and disaster programs for some commodities; emergency programs and eligibility. FSA committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must:

- Be of legal voting age or, if not of legal voting age, supervise and conduct the farming operation of an entire farm.
- Have an interest in a farm or ranch as either:
  - An individual who meets one or more of the following:
    - Is eligible and capable to vote in one's own right.
    - Is a partner of a general partnership.
    - Is a member of a joint venture.
  - Participates or cooperates in any FSA program that is provided by law. A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information to FSA about their farming or ranching operation(s) but may not have applied or received program benefits.

Eligible voters in Local Administrative Area-01, who do not receive a ballot can obtain one from their local FSA county office. Customers can identify which LAA they or their farming operation is in by using our new GIS locator tool available at [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections).

Newly elected committee members will take office Jan. 1, 2024.

The candidates in this year's election are:

Brandon Hessenthaler is nominated in LAA 1, Big Horn County, to serve as a committee member for a 3-year term. Mr. Hessenthaler resides in Byron with his wife Serena and four children. Brandon and his two brothers run the family farm and have produced Barley, Sugar Beets, Corn, and Alfalfa. They also have a beef cow herd. Brandon has been involved in the family farm since 2007.

More information on county committees can be found at [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections) or by contacting the Big Horn County FSA office at (307)765-2689 Ext 2.

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## USDA to Provide More Than \$3 Billion to Commodity and Specialty Crop Producers Impacted by 2022 Natural Disasters

The U. S Department of Agriculture (USDA) will provide more than \$3 billion to commodity and specialty crop producers impacted by natural disaster events in 2022. Eligible impacted producers can apply for financial assistance through the [Emergency Relief Program \(ERP\) 2022](#). The program will help offset the financial impacts of crop yield and value losses from qualifying disasters occurring in 2022.



### Background

On Dec. 29, 2022, President Biden signed into law the *Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2023* (P.L. 117-328) that provides about \$3.7 billion in financial assistance for agricultural producers impacted by eligible natural disasters that occurred in calendar year 2022.

ERP 2022 covers losses to crops, trees, bushes and vines due to qualifying, calendar year 2022 natural disaster events including wildfires, hurricanes, floods, derechos, excessive heat, tornadoes, winter storms, freeze (including a polar vortex), smoke exposure, excessive moisture, qualifying drought and related conditions.

ERP 2022 program benefits will be delivered to eligible producers through a two-track process. FSA intends to make both tracks available to producers at the same time. This two-track approach enables USDA to:

- Streamline the application process.
- Reduce the paperwork burden on producers.
- Proactively include provisions for underserved producers who have not been well served by past emergency relief efforts.
- Encourage producer participation in existing risk management programs to mitigate the impacts of future severe weather events.

It's important to note that disaster-impacted producers may be eligible for ERP 2022 assistance under one or both tracks. To avoid duplicative benefits, if a producer applies for both tracks, the Track 2 payment calculation will take into account any payments received through Track 1.

### **ERP 2022 Application Process – Track 1**

ERP 2022 Track 1 leverages existing federal crop insurance or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) data as the basis for calculating payments for eligible crop producers who received indemnities through these risk management programs.

Although FSA is sending pre-filled ERP 2022 Track 1 application forms to producers who have crop insurance and NAP data already on file with USDA, producers indemnified for losses resulting from 2022 natural disasters do not have to wait to receive the application before requesting ERP 2022 assistance. Effective Oct. 31, 2023, producers can apply for ERP 2022 benefits whether they have received the pre-filled application or not. Receipt of a pre-filled application is not confirmation that a producer is eligible to receive an ERP 2022 Track 1 payment.

USDA estimates that ERP Track 1 benefits will reach more than 206,000 producers who received indemnities for losses covered by federal crop insurance and more than 4,500 producers who obtained NAP coverage for the 2022 crop year.

### **ERP 2022 Application Process – Track 2**

Track 2 is a revenue-based certification program designed to assist eligible producers who suffered an eligible decrease in revenue resulting from 2022 calendar year disaster events when compared with revenue in a benchmark year using revenue information that is readily available from most tax records. In cases where revenue does not reasonably reflect a normal year's revenue, Track 2 provides an alternative method for establishing revenue. Likewise, Track 2 affords producers of crops that are used within an operation and do not generate revenue from the sale of the crop a method for establishing revenue for the purpose of applying for ERP 2022 benefits. Producers are not required to submit tax records to FSA unless requested by the County Committee if required for an FSA compliance spot check.

Although not required when applying for ERP 2022 Track 2, applicants might find the following documents useful to the process:

- Schedule F (Form 1040)
- *Profit or Loss from Farming* or similar tax documents for tax years 2018, 2019, 2022 and 2023.

Track 2 targets gaps in emergency relief assistance for eligible producers whose eligible losses were not covered by crop insurance or NAP including revenue losses too small (shallow loss) to be covered by crop insurance.

Producers interested in applying for ERP 2022 Track 2, should contact their local FSA county office. Additional reference resources can be found on FSA's [emergency relief website](#).

### **Additional Required Forms**

For both ERP 2022 tracks, all producers must have certain required forms on file with FSA within 60 days of the ERP 2022 deadline. Producers can apply for ERP 2022 starting Oct. 31, 2023. The application deadline

has not yet been determined and will be announced at a later date. If not already on file, producers can update, complete and submit required forms to FSA at any time.

Required forms:

- Form AD-2047, *Customer Data Worksheet*.
- Form CCC-902, *Farm Operating Plan* for an individual or legal entity.
- Form CCC-901, *Member Information for Legal Entities* (if applicable).
- Form FSA-510, *Request for an Exception to the \$125,000 Payment Limitation for Certain Programs* (if applicable).
- Form CCC-860, *Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification*, if applicable, for the 2022 program year.
- A highly erodible land conservation (sometimes referred to as HELC) and wetland conservation certification (Form AD-1026 *Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification*) for the ERP producer and applicable affiliates.

Most producers, especially those who have previously participated in FSA programs, will likely have these required forms on file. However, those who are uncertain or want to confirm the status of their forms can contact their local FSA county office.

### Future Insurance Coverage Requirements

All producers who receive ERP 2022 payments must purchase crop insurance, or NAP coverage where crop insurance is not available, in the next two available crop years as determined by the Secretary. Purchased coverage must be at the 60/100 coverage level or higher for insured crops or at the catastrophic coverage level or higher for NAP crops.

### More Information

ERP 2022 eligibility details and payment calculation factor tables are available on the [emergency relief website](#), in the [ERP Track 1](#) and [ERP Track 2](#) fact sheets and through your local [FSA county office](#).

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## USDA Reminds Producers of Fall Application Deadlines for Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)



USDA Big Horn County Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers of approaching application deadlines for purchasing risk coverage for some crops through the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). NAP provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops impacted by natural disasters that result in lower yields, crop losses, or prevented crop planting.

NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available, including forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass and more.

Upcoming application deadlines for NAP coverage in Big Horn County for the 2024 production season include:

- Biennial and Perennial Forage Crops and Honey: Deadline **December 1, 2023**

NAP basic coverage is available at 55% of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50% of expected production. Buy-up coverage is available in some cases. NAP offers higher levels of coverage, ranging from 50% to 65% of expected production in 5% increments, at 100% of the average market price. Producers of organic crops and crops marketed directly to consumers also may exercise the “buy-up” option to obtain NAP coverage of 100% of the average market price at coverage levels ranging between 50% and 65% of expected production. Buy-up coverage is not available for crops intended for grazing.

For all coverage levels, the NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties. Premiums apply for buy-up coverage.

If a producer has a Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification (form CCC-860) on file with FSA, it may serve as an application for basic coverage for all eligible crops beginning with crop year 2022. These producers will have all NAP-related service fees for basic coverage waived. These producers may also receive a 50% premium reduction if higher levels of coverage are elected on form CCC-471, prior to the application closing date for each crop.

To learn more about NAP visit [fsa.usda.gov/nap](https://fsa.usda.gov/nap) or contact your local USDA Service Center at (307)765-2689 Ext 2.

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## Reminders for FSA Direct and Guaranteed Borrowers with Real Estate Security

Farm loan borrowers who have pledged real estate as security for their Farm Service Agency (FSA) direct or guaranteed loans are responsible for maintaining loan collateral. Borrowers must obtain prior consent or approval from FSA or the guaranteed lender for any transaction that affects real estate security. These transactions include, but are not limited to:



- Leases of any kind
- Easements of any kind
- Subordinations
- Partial releases
- Sales

Failure to meet or follow the requirements in the loan agreement, promissory note, and other security instruments could lead to nonmonetary default which could jeopardize your current and future loans.

It is critical that borrowers keep an open line of communication with their FSA loan staff or guaranteed lender when it comes to changes in their operation. For more information on borrower responsibilities, read [Your FSA Farm Loan Compass](#).

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## NRCS Announces the 30-day signup period for 2024 Inflation Reduction Act funding.



Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is announcing the 30-day open application window, ending on November 29, for farmers, ranchers, and landowners to sign up for USDA conservation funding.

Jackie Byam, NRCS State Conservationist in Wyoming, announces that farmers, ranchers, and landowners interested in any of the following programs need to apply by November 29, for funding in 2024. Applications are being taken at all USDA Service Centers in Wyoming.

- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) initiative - Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) IRA initiative

"The Inflation Reduction Act provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity for our Wyoming ranchers, farmers and other agricultural and forest landowners," said Byam. "The act will allow qualifying producers in Wyoming to invest in climate-smart practices that create value and economic opportunities. Agriculture is the backbone of Wyoming and what we produce here has far reaching impacts beyond our state. We look forward to seeing our producers take advantage of this additional funding to existing NRCS programs."

All eligible applications received by November 29, will be prioritized, evaluated, and ranked for funding in 2024. Farmers may contact their local USDA Service Center to get started on producer eligibility and planning. Farmers and Ranchers who are interested in practices that may require permits, such as manure storage or streambank restoration, to begin planning and seeking permits as soon as possible.

Special incentives are also available for beginning farmers, socially disadvantaged and other historically underserved customers at increased payment rates.

Landowners interested in applying for consideration in any of the listed programs should contact their local NRCS office at the USDA Service Center for their county. For more information, visit [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov).

NRCS does accept applications for all programs year around and farmers, ranchers and landowners are encouraged to continually work with their local NRCS office personnel to better understand which programs will best work for them.



## Big Horn County USDA Service Center

408 Greybull Ave  
Greybull WY 82426

Phone: (307)765-2689  
Fax: (855)415-3432

### Farm Service Agency

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### Natural Resources Conservation Service

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**County Committee:**

**South Big Horn Conservation District**

Martin Mercer-Chairman  
Spencer Ellis-Vice Chairman  
Justine Paxton-Member

COC Meeting: December 13, 2023

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