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From Darla's desk...



Happy New Year Park County farmers and ranchers!

Before this month is over; the deadlines for the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Programs (ELAP) will be here. If you have not applied and/or have not finished submitting the documentation needed for your applications; please give the office a call ASAP to get an appointment. The deadline to have everything submitted is January 30th.

It's time to complete your yearly ARC/PLC signups as soon as you know your 2023 plans. Election and Enrollment deadline is **March 15, 2023**, if you plan to change your election. If you are unable to visit the office, we can send your paperwork via OneSpan Sign for an electronic signature, all you need is a valid email and either a cell number or password option to receive your authentication code.

With calving and lambing season just around the corner I would like to remind everyone of the importance of keeping good records if a weather event occurs causing death loss. Along with keeping a record of losses it is also very important to document the weather conditions that may be causing the losses. The better your records are the easier it is to document your loss for our programs. Make sure you contact this office at the first sign of losses to get your paperwork started, a quick phone call or email is all that needs to be done to get the process started.

Park County Farm Service Agency Announces County Committee Election Results

Park County U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced that Tim Acord was elected to represent local administrative area (LAA) 3.

County committee members are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA. They help deliver programs at the county level and work to serve the needs of local producers. All recently elected county committee members will take office in January 2022 and will be joining the existing committee. Every FSA office is required to have a county committee, which are made up of local farmers, ranchers and foresters elected by local producers.

County committee members impact the administration of FSA within a community by applying their knowledge and judgment to help FSA make important decisions on commodity support programs, conservation programs, indemnity and disaster programs, emergency programs and eligibility.



County committee members serve local producers through their decision making and help shape the culture of a local FSA office. They also ensure the fair and equitable administration of FSA farm programs in their counties and are accountable to the Secretary of Agriculture. Members conduct hearings and reviews as requested by the state committee, ensure that underserved farmers, ranchers, and foresters are fairly represented, make recommendations to the state committee on existing programs, monitor changes in farm programs and inform farmers of the purpose and provisions of FSA programs. They also assist with outreach and inform underserved producers, such as beginning farmers, ranchers, and foresters about FSA opportunities.

For more information, visit the FSA website at fsa.usda.gov/elections or contact the Park County FSA office at (307)754-9411 Ext. 2.

Farmers Can Now Make 2023 Crop Year Elections, Enroll in Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Programs

Agricultural producers can now change election and enroll in the [Agriculture Risk Coverage \(ARC\) and Price Loss Coverage](#) programs for the 2023 crop year, two key safety net programs offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Signup began Oct. 17, 2022, and producers have until March 15, 2023, to enroll in these two programs. Additionally, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) has started issuing payments totaling more than \$255 million to producers with 2021 crops that have triggered payments through ARC or PLC.

2023 Elections and Enrollment

Producers can elect coverage and enroll in ARC-County (ARC-CO) or PLC, which provide crop-by-crop protection, or ARC-Individual (ARC-IC), which protects the entire farm. Although election changes for 2023 are optional, producers must enroll through a signed contract each year. Also, if a producer has a multi-year contract on the farm and makes an election change for 2023, they must sign a new contract.

If producers do not submit their election by the March 15, 2023 deadline, their election remains the same as their 2022 election for crops on the farm. Farm owners cannot enroll in either program unless they have a share interest in the farm.

Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium and short grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

Web-Based Decision Tools

In partnership with USDA, the University of Illinois and Texas A&M University offer web-based decision tools to assist producers in making informed, educated decisions using crop data specific to their respective farming operations. Tools include:

- [Gardner-farmdoc Payment Calculator](#), a tool available through the University of Illinois allows producers to estimate payments for farms and counties for ARC-CO and PLC.
- [ARC and PLC Decision Tool](#), a tool available through Texas A&M that allows producers to obtain basic information regarding the decision and factors that should be taken into consideration such as future commodity prices and historic yields to estimate payments for 2022.

2021 Payments and Contracts

ARC and PLC payments for a given crop year are paid out the following fall to allow actual county yields and the Market Year Average prices to be finalized. This month, FSA processed payments to producers enrolled in 2021 ARC-CO, ARC-IC and PLC for covered commodities that triggered for the crop year.

For ARC-CO, producers can view the [2021 ARC-CO Benchmark Yields and Revenues](#) online database, for payment rates applicable to their county and each covered commodity. For PLC, payments have triggered for rapeseed and peanuts.

For ARC-IC, producers should contact their local FSA office for additional information pertaining to 2021 payment information, which relies on producer-specific yields for the crop and farm to determine benchmark yields and actual year yields when calculating revenues.

By the Numbers

In 2021, producers signed nearly 1.8 million ARC or PLC contracts, and 251 million out of 273 million base acres were enrolled in the programs. For the 2022 crop year signed contracts surpassed 1.8 million, to be paid in the fall of 2023, if a payment triggers.

Since ARC and PLC were first authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and reauthorized by the 2018 Farm Bill, these safety-net programs have paid out more than \$34.9 billion to producers of covered commodities.

Crop Insurance Considerations

ARC and PLC are part of a broader safety net provided by USDA, which also includes crop insurance and marketing assistance loans.

Producers are reminded that ARC and PLC elections and enrollments can impact eligibility for some crop insurance products.

Producers on farms with a PLC election have the option of purchasing Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) through their Approved Insurance Provider; however, producers on farms where ARC is the election are ineligible for SCO on their planted acres for that crop on that farm.

Unlike SCO, the Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO) is unaffected by an ARC election. Producers may add ECO regardless of the farm program election.

Upland cotton farmers who choose to enroll seed cotton base acres in ARC or PLC are ineligible for the stacked income protection plan (STAX) on their planted cotton acres for that farm.

More Information

For more information on ARC and PLC, visit the [ARC and PLC webpage](#) or contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their Operation



Farmers and ranchers can use the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* on [farmers.gov](#) to find information on USDA farm loans that may best fit their operations.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers a variety of loan options to help farmers finance their operations. From buying land to financing the purchase of equipment, FSA loans can help.

USDA conducted field research in eight states, gathering input from farmers and FSA farm loan staff to better understand their needs and challenges.

How the Tool Works

Farmers who are looking for financing options to operate a farm or buy land can answer a few simple questions about what they are looking to fund and how much money they need to borrow. After submitting their answers, farmers will receive information on farm loans that best fit their specific needs. The loan application and additional resources also will be provided.

Farmers can download application quick guides that outline what to expect from preparing an application to receiving a loan decision. There are four guides that cover loans to individuals, entities, and youth, as well as information on microloans. The guides include general eligibility requirements and a list of required forms and documentation for each type of loan. These guides can help farmers prepare before their first USDA service center visit with a loan officer.

Farmers can access the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* by visiting farmers.gov/fund and clicking the “Start” button. Follow the prompts and answer five simple questions to receive loan information that is applicable to your agricultural operation. The tool is built to run on any modern browser like Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or the Safari browser, and is fully functional on mobile devices. It does not work in Internet Explorer.

About Farmers.gov

In 2018, USDA unveiled farmers.gov, a dynamic, mobile-friendly public website combined with an authenticated portal where farmers will be able to apply for programs, process transactions, and manage accounts.

The *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* is one of many resources on farmers.gov to help connect farmers to information that can help their operations. Earlier this year, USDA launched the *My Financial Information* feature, which enables farmers to view their loan information, history, payments, and alerts by logging into the website.

USDA is building farmers.gov for farmers, by farmers. In addition to the interactive farm loan features, the site also offers a Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool. Farmers can visit farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool#step-1 to find disaster assistance programs that can help their operation recover from natural disasters.

For more information, contact your Park County USDA Service Center at 307-754-9411 or visit farmers.gov.

What are Your 2023 Conservation Resolutions?

2022 is coming to an end, which means it's time to start thinking about what you want to work on in the new year. Setting resolutions can be hard, but we're here to help!

If you would like to make a #ConservationResolution for 2023, here are some options to consider:

- Incorporate cover crops into your operation.
- Extend your growing season by using a high tunnel.
- Improve your soil health by utilizing no-till practices.
- Provide recreational opportunities and wildlife habitat by restoring wetlands.
- Reduce input costs by focusing on nutrient management.
- Protect topsoil and groundwater quality by devoting environmentally sensitive agricultural land to conservation benefits instead of farming.

Resolutions can be daunting and hard to stick to, but here are some tips for how to make them successful. · Make a plan - To get started on your #ConservationResolutions, we recommend you stop by your local USDA service center, so we can discuss your vision for your land. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can provide you with free technical assistance and or advice.



· Don't do it alone – USDA's conservation programs available through NRCS and the Farm Service Agency (FSA) give you the tools and resources to protect environmentally sensitive land and restore grasslands, wetlands, and forests, which leads to cleaner water and air, healthier soil, and enhanced wildlife habitat. We can also help with financial assistance to help you achieve your #ConservationResolutions

· See what other landowners are doing - Learn about the benefits of conservation practices directly from the farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners applying them with our series of 90-second videos. Explore the different types of conservation practices by watching our Conservation at Work series. You can also read producer profiles on farmers.gov.

In January, we'll be highlighting different #ConservationResolutions that can help protect our natural resources. Follow along to start yours!



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County Committee

Emily Karst - Chairperson
Lynn George - Vice-Chairperson
Tim Accord - Regular Member

Next County Committee Meeting: TBD