



NEWSLETTER



Big Horn County

408 Greybull Ave - Greybull, WY 82426

February 2015

Farm Service Agency

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2014 Farm Bill and ARC/PLC

Producers are reminded that the deadline to update yield history and/or reallocate base acres is **Feb. 27, 2015**. Farm owners and producers can choose between the new 2014 Farm Bill established programs, Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) through **March 31, 2015**. The new programs, designed to help producers better manage risk, usher in one of the most significant reforms to U.S. farm programs in decades.

USDA helped create online tools to assist in the decision process, allowing farm owners and producers to enter information about their operation and see projections that show what ARC and/or PLC will mean for them under possible future scenarios. Farm owners and producers can access the online resources, available at www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc, from the convenience of their home computer or mobile device at any time. Covered commodities in Big Horn County include barley, corn, grain sorghum, mustard seed, oats, dry peas, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

Dates associated with ARC and PLC that farm owners and producers need to know:

- **Now through Feb. 27, 2015:** Farm owners may visit their local Farm Service Agency office to update yield history and/or reallocate base acres.
- **Now through March 31, 2015:** Producers make a one-time election between ARC and PLC for the 2014 through 2018 crop years.
- **Mid-April 2015 through summer 2015:** Producers sign contracts for 2014 and 2015 crop years.
- **October 2015:** Payments issued for 2014 crop year, if needed.

Please stop by our office and complete your signups before the above deadlines.

???? How Do I Decide ????

The USDA has partnered with Texas A & M and the University of Illinois to create web tools to help producers decide what options might benefit them the most. Here are some links to websites to help in your decision making process. The county office staff will not be able to make this decision for you so it is up to you to do the research. Both of the decision making tools allow you to input your actual information and market predictions, or use USDA, FAPRI or CBO market predictions to assist you.

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=arpl&topic=landing>

<http://fsa.usapas.com/>

<https://usda.afpc.tamu.edu/>

Annual Notifications

Bank Account Changes

Current policy mandates that FSA payments be electronically transferred into a bank account. In order for timely payments to be made, producers need to notify the FSA county office when an account has been changed or if another financial institution purchases the bank where payments are sent. Payments can be delayed if the FSA office is not aware of updates to bank accounts and routing numbers.

Farm Reconstitutions

When changes in farm ownership or operation take place, a farm *reconstitution* is necessary. The reconstitution — or recon — is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. Farm Recon methods are:

Estate Method— the division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate;

Designation of Landowner Method — may be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons. In order to use this method, the land sold must have been owned for at least three years, or a waiver granted, and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding;

Default Method — the division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system.

Special Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact the county FSA office staff directly or by phone.

Breaking New Ground

Landowners and operators are reminded that in order to receive payments from USDA, compliance with Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions are required. Farmers with HEL determined soils are reminded of tillage, crop residue, and rotation requirements as specified per their conservation plan. Producers are to notify the USDA Farm Service Agency prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to insure compliance. Failure to obtain advance approval for any of these situations can result in the loss of eligibility and all Federal payments.

Controlled Substance

Any person convicted under federal or state law of a controlled substance violation could be ineligible for USDA payments or benefits. Violations include planting, harvesting or growing a prohibited plant. Prohibited plants include marijuana, opium, poppies and other drug producing plants.

Power of Attorney

For those who find it difficult to visit the county office because of work schedules, distance, health, etc..., FSA has a power of attorney form available that allows producers to designate another person to conduct business at the office. If interested, contact our office or any Farm Service Agency office for more information.

Appeal Process

After an FSA official makes a decision on a request for USDA services or application, the producer will be sent a letter informing him/her of the decision and options that can be pursued. Generally, program participants have three choices — an informal review with the original agency decision-maker, an opportunity for mediation and finally an appeal to the next level of authority within the agency.

FSA Signature Policy

Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office staff by either spouse. There are exceptions to the rule, where spouses may not sign on behalf of each other for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities. Individual signatures are also required on certain Farm Loan Program and Farm Storage Facility Loan documents. For more clarification on spousal signature authority, feel free to contact your local FSA office.

Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for USDA. All individuals who are not U.S. citizens, and have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA with 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form (FSA-153) could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, Realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

Attention All Buyers of Agricultural Products

It is required that buyers of agricultural products check or register with the Secretary of State's Office to determine if there are liens against the seller of the product. If a lien is found, you are required to place the lien holder's name on the check as well as that of the seller. Ag products include but are not limited to: Livestock (including horses), crops used for feed (hay, silage, oats, etc.), machinery, equipment, and all other crops. **Failure to place the lien holder's name on the check may result in civil legal action being taken against the buyer of the product. Protect yourself as a buyer!** You may contact the Secretary of State's Office at (307) 777-7311.

NAP Insurance

The Non-insurable Assistance Program (NAP) is available for crops which crop insurance is not available. In Big Horn County this includes grazing crops, mixed forage hay and small grain hay. NAP protects the producer against catastrophic losses. The deadline to purchase NAP for spring seeded crops such as small grains for hay is **April 15, 2015**. The fee for NAP is \$250 per crop per county, with a county maximum of \$750 and a multi county maximum of \$1,875.

Producers will have a buy up option for the 2015 NAP coverage on crops other than grazing. With the buy-up option producers will be able to choose between regular CAT level coverage or 50, 55, 60 or 65% coverage at 100% of the payment level. These buy-up coverage levels will have a premium calculation based on the level of coverage and acres planted to the covered commodity. Premiums will be billed at the end of the coverage period similar to mutli peril coverage.

To qualify for NAP benefits producers must 1) file an annual acreage report, 2) File a Notice of Loss within 15 days of an apparent loss, and 3) Report production to the county office.

Continuous letters have been mailed to 2014 NAP policy holders. Call the county office for more information and to apply for 2015 NAP benefits.

USDA Reminds Farmers of 2014 Farm Bill Conservation Compliance Changes

The 2014 Farm Bill implements a change that requires farmers to have a Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation Certification (AD-1026) on file. For farmers to be eligible for premium support on their federal crop insurance, a completed and signed AD-1026 certification form must be on file with the FSA. The Risk Management Agency (RMA), through the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC), manages the federal crop insurance program that provides the modern farm safety net for American farmers and ranchers.

Since enactment of the 1985 Farm Bill, eligibility for most commodity, disaster, and conservation programs has been linked to compliance with the highly erodible land conservation and wetland conservation provisions. The 2014 Farm Bill continues the requirement that producers adhere to conservation compliance guidelines to be eligible for most programs administered by FSA and NRCS. This includes most financial assistance such as the new price and revenue protection programs, the Conservation Reserve Program, the Livestock Disaster Assistance programs and Marketing Assistance Loans and most programs implemented by FSA. It also includes the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the Conservation Stewardship Program, and other conservation programs implemented by NRCS.

Many FSA and Natural Resource Conservation (NRCS) programs already have implemented this requirement and therefore most producers should already have an AD-1026 form on file for their associated lands. If however an AD-1026 form has not been filed or is incomplete then farmers are reminded of the deadline of June 1, 2015.

When a farmer completes and submits the AD-1026 certification form, FSA and NRCS staff will review the associated farm records and outline any additional actions that may be required to meet the required compliance with the conservation compliance provisions.

FSA recently released a revised form AD-1026, which is available at USDA Service Centers and online at: www.fsa.usda.gov. USDA will publish a rule later this year that will provide details outlining the connection of conservation compliance with crop insurance premium support.

Big Horn County FSA Office
408 Greybull Ave
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**** Attention ****

If you are not receiving our newsletters and updates electronically, now is the time to sign up. The paper newsletters will soon be gone so it is vitally important that you sign up for GovDelivery. Contact this office to find out how you can subscribe to GovDelivery or subscribe online at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe>. This may soon be our only option of advertising our programs.

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting/event/function should contact Brenda Miller at 307-765-2689 extension 2 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339 by December 10, 2014.

Dates to Remember

February 27 Yield Update and Base Acre Reallocation Deadline
March 31 ARC/PLC Election Deadline
April 15 NAP Spring Crop Deadline

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. 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)