



NEWSLETTER



Big Horn County

408 Greybull Ave - Greybull, WY 82426

April 2014

Farm Service Agency

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Office Hours:

Monday - Friday
8:00 am – 4:30 pm

County Committee

Jan Barnett, Chairperson
Wilford Tippetts, Vice-Chairman
Michael Rasmussen, Member

NRCS Staff

Monte Bush- DC
Robert Boettcher -SC

Conservation District

Janet Hallsted, Greybull
Kristen Tilley, Lovell

Farm Loan Staff

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NEW FARM BILL PROVIDES PERMANENT LIVESTOCK DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Livestock Forage Disaster Program

The 2014 Farm Bill makes the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) a permanent program and provides retroactive authority to cover eligible losses back to Oct. 1, 2011. LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who have suffered grazing losses due to drought or fire. LFP payments for drought are equal to 60 percent of the monthly feed cost for up to five months. LFP payments for fire on federally managed rangeland are equal to 50 percent of the monthly feed cost for the number of days the producer is prohibited from grazing the managed rangeland, not to exceed 180 calendar days. The grazing losses must have occurred on or after Oct. 1, 2011.

Sign-up began on April 15, 2014, at any local Farm Service Agency (FSA) service center. Documentation on beginning inventory numbers and non-irrigated grazing lands will be required. Some eligibility restrictions may apply. Please consult your local FSA office for details.

Eligible producers in Big Horn County will be eligible for 4 monthly payments for 2012 and 2013.

Livestock Indemnity Payments

The 2014 Farm Bill makes the Livestock Indemnity Payments (LIP) a permanent program and provides retroactive authority to cover eligible livestock losses back to Oct. 1, 2011. LIP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who have suffered livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law, including wolves and avian predators. LIP payments are equal to 75 percent of the market value of the applicable livestock on the day before the date of death of the livestock as determined by the Secretary.

Sign-up began on April 15th, 2014, at any local Farm Service Agency (FSA) service center. Some eligibility restrictions may apply. Please consult a local FSA office for details.

Livestock owners should record all pertinent information of livestock death losses due to adverse weather and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law.

Documentation of the number and kind of livestock that have died, supplemented if possible by such items as:

- Photographs or video records to document the loss, dated if possible
- Purchase records, veterinarian records, production records, bank or other loan documents
- Written contracts, records assembled for tax purposes, private insurance documents, and other similar reliable documents.

Additional information regarding LIP or other FSA programs can be found by visiting a nearby FSA Service Center or online at fsa.usda.gov.

2014 Committee Election Results

Congratulations to Michael Rasmussen who was elected to represent producers in LAA 2 on the county committee. The COC held their annual organization meeting February 20, 2014. Jan Barnett was elected committee chairperson, Wilford Tippetts was elected to the office of vice-chairperson and Michael Rasmussen will serve as the regular member.

Spring Flooding 2014

Signup began April 1 and will continue until May 2, 2014 for producers that suffered losses due to the flooding caused by the ice jams on the Big Horn and Nowood rivers. The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) provides cost shares to eligible producers who suffered a loss significant enough that it would be cost prohibitive for the producer to repair the land on their own. The producer must have sustained an estimated minimum of \$1000 in damages to qualify for ECP. For further information on this program, please contact the FSA office.

2014 Farm Bill

The new Farm Bill will bring significant changes in programs administered by USDA. At this point, we know few details on the new programs. We do know that there will be 2 options available under the farm program:

1. Price Loss Coverage (PLC)
2. Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC)

We do not have the rules, nor do we know when signups will begin.

Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) provisions have been changed. Producers whose AGI exceeds \$900,000 will not be eligible to receive benefits from most programs administered by FSA or NRCS.

Commodity loans and Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP) programs will continue.

Wool producers

With the decline in wool prices there could be and LDP payment on wool this year. Be sure to complete a 633EZ page 1 and file it with the county office before you lose beneficial interest in your wool. Contact the county office or obtain the form at <http://fsaintranet.sc.egov.usda.gov/dam/ffasforms/currentforms.asp>.

Farm Loan Programs

As a farmer or rancher, whether you are just starting out or have many years of experience, there are times when you need to borrow money to start, expand, sustain, or make changes to your business. You may be able to obtain a loan or loan guarantee through FSA's Farm Loan Programs if you are a farmer or rancher who is unable to obtain credit elsewhere. FSA loans are temporary in nature.

Under the Direct Loan Program the loan types available are: Farm Ownership loans will help you purchase or enlarge a farm or ranch – loan limit is \$300,000; **Operating Loans**, will help you purchase livestock & equipment and annual operating expenses – loan limit is \$300,000; **Microloans** are designed to help small, family operations secure loans for \$35,000 or less. Loans can be used to pay for initial start-up expenses, tools, irrigation, delivery vehicles, annual expenses, to purchase land, livestock equipment, feed, seed and supplies or to construct buildings to make farm improvements. Microloans will be targeted toward small farmers, veterans and disadvantaged producers.

Under the Guarantee Loan program the loan types are Guarantee Farm Ownership and Guarantee Farm Operating. The Guarantee loans are made and serviced by commercial lenders. FSA guarantees the lender's against loss, up to 95%. Loan limit is \$1,355,000.00.

Changes to Your Farming Operation

If you have bought or sold land, or if you have added or dropped rented land from your operation, make sure you report the changes to the office as soon as possible. You need to provide a copy of your deed or recorded land contract for purchased property. Failure to maintain accurate records with FSA on all land you have an interest in can lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties. Making the record changes now will save you time at crop reporting. Update signature authorization when changes in the operation occur. Producers are reminded to contact the office of a change in operations on a farm so that records can be kept current and accurate.

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.

Dates to Remember

- April 15** Start of LFP sign up
- April 15** Start of LIP sign up
- May 2** Deadline to sign up for ECP
- May 7** County Committee Meeting
- May 26** Memorial Day- Office closed

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)

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