

Cowboy Country Connection



NEWSLETTER



Aug/Sept. 2011

Carbon/Albany County

101 Cypress Ave.

PO Box 607

Saratoga, WY 82331

307-326-5657 x 2

Fax: 307-326-8572

<http://www.usda.gov/wy>

Hours:

Monday-Friday

8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

County Committee

Montie Munroe, Chairperson

Kelly Kennedy, Vice-Chairperson

Tom Page, Member

Pat Sheehan, Member

Melinda Sims, Member

Farm Service Agency

Sheryl Hunter, CED

Dixie Mount, FLO- Platte County,

307-322-4050

Natural Resources

Conservation Service

Mark Shirley, DC

Jerome Dougherty, Baggs

383-7860

Jeremie Artery, Med. Bow

379-2221

Ruben Vasquez, DC Laramie

745-3698



Changes in the Office

It is with mixed emotions that we are notifying all of you of the recent changes in this office. The County Committee members and I are sad to announce that we have lost Deb as a county office employee. However, she had the opportunity to advance to the Geospatial Information Service (GIS) Specialist.

As many of you know, Deb worked to get all of your farms and ranches correctly outlined in the GIS system. She did such a great job of taking on that project that her services are now being used at the state level. While she will no longer be working directly out of this office, her expertise will still be available to help us and all of the other offices in the state.

Due to the current government budget issues, this office will not be able to fill the position vacated with Deb's promotion at this time. If you call the office for questions or assistance and get the answering machine, please leave a message and I will return your call as soon as possible. Or I may be contacted via e-mail at sheryl.hunter@wy.usda.gov. I appreciate your understanding and cooperation with the situation.



eNewsletters and eUpdates from FSA – watch for more news!

The Farm Service Agency is exploring more cost-effective and resource-conserving options to provide farmers and ranchers with news, information, deadlines and bulletins from your state FSA and from your own county FSA office.

Take a look at the GovDelivery options now available from the USDA / FSA. Just open the FSA home page at www.fsa.usda.gov and click on the E-MAIL UPDATES icon where you can select your subscriptions. Watch for more news and the opportunity to sign up to receive your news quicker and at less cost via e-mail.

CREP & Continuous CRP Available

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) allows farmers and ranchers to voluntarily enroll environmentally sensitive land into a program that decreases erosion, restores wildlife habitat and safeguards ground and surface water. CREP is a partnership with federal and state government and is limited to specific geographic areas.

Environmentally sensitive acreage qualifying for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) or Continuous CRP will be eligible for annual rental payments and cost-share of up to 50 percent on approved practices. These programs will remain funded, and continue to provide heightened environmental benefits on select areas.



NAP Loss Filing

The CCC-576, Notice of Loss, is used to report failed acreage and prevented planting and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. Timely filing the Notice of Loss is required for ALL CROPS INCLUDING GRASSES. For losses on crops covered by the Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and crop insurance, you must file a CCC-576 (notice of loss) in the FSA County Office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent.

If filing for prevented planting, an acreage report and CCC-576 must be filed within 15 calendar days of the final planting date for the crop.

If you have hay meadows that you cannot harvest, remember to file your notice of loss prior to turning livestock out to graze!

Important Dates

Aug. 15- Official ECP signup begins for Carbon and Albany counties.

Sept. 1- 2010 Production Deadline for ACRE

Sept. 5- Labor Day Holiday
Office Closed

Sept. 14- Deadline to sign up for ECP in Carbon and Albany counties.

Sept. 22- County Committee Meeting at Saratoga

Oct. 10- Columbus Day Holiday
Office Closed

Oct. 19- Albany County Office Day

Dec. 1- Deadline to purchase NAP coverage for 2012

Anytime- Contact the office to report adverse weather conditions & losses.

Anytime- Accepting Continuous CRP applications.

Anytime- Accepting EQIP applications.

15 Days- after realizing a loss to file a Notice of Loss on NAP covered crops

Actively Engaged

FSA wants to remind producers about the rules that govern the requirements to be 'actively engaged' in farming. These rules apply to eligibility for payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) or Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program administered by FSA.

Normally the stockholder or a member of a legal entity **must** make contributions of active personal labor and/or active personal management for the farming operation. The contributions are to be performed on regular basis, must be identifiable, and separate from the contributions of others.

The exception to this rule for a stockholder or member of a legal entity only occurs if both of the following apply:

- At least half of the interest in the legal entity is held by stockholders or members who are providing active personal labor or active personal management; and
- The total direct payments received both directly and indirectly, by the legal entity and each of the members doesn't exceed \$40,000.

Adjusted Gross Income Report to IRS

Producers are reminded they must submit an Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) verification consent form (CCC-927 or CCC-928) to the IRS as soon as possible in order to maintain eligibility for 2009 and 2010 program benefits.

The consent form authorizes IRS to verify for FSA whether a payment recipient's AGI meets the eligibility requirements for FSA programs.

Producers who fail to file these forms before Sept. 2011 will receive a notice from the National Office stating that the producer is ineligible for 2009 and/or 2010 payments.

IRS requires written consent from all individuals or legal entities before verification of the average AGI can be provided to USDA. Individuals must submit form CCC-927 and legal entities must submit form CCC-928.



Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

The Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program allows producers of eligible commodities to obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities.

The new maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL is \$500,000. Participants are now required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with CCC providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent drying and handling equipment. New loan terms of 7, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan. Interest rates for each term rate may be different and are based on the rate which CCC borrows from the Treasury Department.

Payments are available in the form of a partial disbursement and the remaining final disbursement. The partial disbursement will be available after a portion of the construction has been completed. The final fund disbursement will be made when all construction is completed. The maximum amount of the partial disbursement will be 50 percent of the projected and approved total loan amount.

Applications for FSFL must be submitted to the FSA county office that maintains the farm's records. An FSFL must be approved before any site preparation or construction can begin.

The following commodities are eligible for farm storage facility loans:

- Corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley or minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain
- Corn, grain sorghum, wheat, oats or barley harvested as other-than-whole grain
- Pulse crops - lentils, small chickpeas and dry peas
- Hay
- Renewable biomass
- Fruits (including nuts) and vegetables - cold storage facilities

For more information about FSFL please visit your FSA county office or

www.fsa.usda.gov

Hispanic and Women Farmers

A process to resolve the claims of Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who believe they were discriminated against when seeking USDA farm loans is being established.

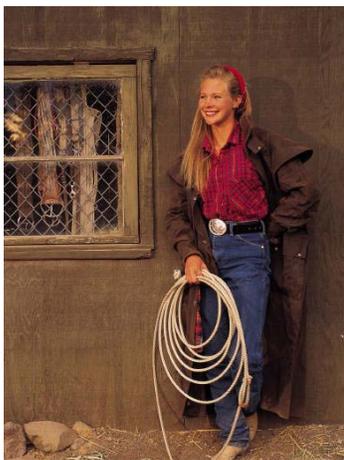
If you believe that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) improperly denied farm loan benefits to you during certain time periods between 1981 and 2000 because you are Hispanic, or because you are female, you may be eligible to apply for compensation.

For additional information on this claims process and other settlement issues contact:

Hispanic and Women Farmer Claims Process
[:www.farmerclaims.gov](http://www.farmerclaims.gov) or 1-888-508-4429

Pigford - Black Farmers Discrimination Litigation
www.blackfarmercase.com or 1-866-950-5547

Keepseagle - Native American Farmers Class Action Settlement
www.IndianFarmClass.com or 1-888-233-5506



Marketing Assistance Loans

A Marketing Assistance Loan (MAL) is available for producers who share in the risk of producing the crop. To be eligible, a producer must maintain continual beneficial interest in the crop from harvest through the earlier of the date the loan is repaid or CCC takes title to the commodity. Beneficial interest means retaining the ability to make decisions about the commodity; responsibility for loss or damage to the commodity; and maintaining title to the commodity. Once beneficial interest in a commodity is lost, the commodity is ineligible for loan — even if the producer regains beneficial interest.

Commodity loan eligibility also requires compliance with conservation and wetland protection requirements; beneficial interest requirements, acreage reporting and ensuring that the commodity meets Commodity Credit Corporation minimum grade and quality standards. For commodities to be eligible they must have been produced by an eligible producer, be in existence and in a storable condition and be merchantable for food, feed or other uses as determined by CCC. The quality of the commodity in farm storage must be maintained throughout the term of the loan.

Producers do not have to participate in the Direct and Counter-Cyclical and/or ACRE Programs to be eligible for commodity loans.

Violating provisions of a marketing assistance loan may trigger administrative actions, such as assessing liquidated damages, calling the loan and denial of future farm-stored loans.

The most common violations are removing or disposing of a commodity being used as loan collateral without prior authorization and providing an incorrect quantity certification.

Rural Youth Loans

FSA makes loans to rural youths to establish and operate income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5000.

Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

United States citizen or a legal resident alien (or permanent resident of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands)

Youth Loans, Cont.

- 10 years to 20 years of age
- Comply with FSA's general eligibility requirements
- Reside in a rural area, city or town with a population of 50,000 or fewer people
- Unable to get a loan from other sources
- conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the project and the loan, along with providing adequate supervision.

Stop by the county office for help preparing and processing the application forms.



Loans for the Socially Disadvantaged

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. Loans are available for operating type loans and/or purchase or improve farms or ranches.

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, the FSA has provided priority funding for Socially Disadvantaged Applicants (SDA).

Socially disadvantaged applicants are from groups whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as a member of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities.

For purposes of this program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

If producers or their spouses believe they will qualify as socially disadvantaged, they should contact their local FSA office for details. FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

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Saratoga, WY 82331

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance programs. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC 20250-9410, or call 800-795-3272 (voice) or 202-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal employment opportunity employer.

Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)

All agricultural producers of Carbon and Albany counties, who suffered damage as a result of the recent flooding, are now eligible to apply for the Emergency Conservation Program. USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) provides emergency funding and technical assistance for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate agricultural land damaged by natural disaster and for carrying out emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought. Funding for ECP is appropriated by Congress.

ECP program participants receive cost-share assistance of **up to 75 percent** of the cost to implement approved emergency conservation practices, as determined by county FSA committees. To rehabilitate farmland, ECP program participants may implement emergency conservation practices, such as: remove debris; restore fences and conservation structures

The official sign up period will be August 15 through September 14, 2011. Please contact the Saratoga Farm Service Agency at 307-326-5657 ext. 2 if you have questions or would like to sign up to participate.

Beginning and Limited Resource Farmers

FSA assists beginning farmers and or members of socially disadvantaged groups to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's median size.

Each member of an entity must meet the eligibility requirements. Loan approval is not guaranteed.

Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit www.fsa.usda.gov