



# NEWSLETTER



**Natrona/Converse Counties**

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**November 2012**

**Farm Service Agency**

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**Office Hours:**

Monday - Friday  
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**NRCS Staff**

Kenny Wolfley, Casper - DC  
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**County Committee**

Jarad Vollman, Chairman  
Neil Forgey, Vice-Chairman  
Leslie Hendry, Member  
Philip Johnson, Member  
Kem Nicolayson, Member

**Farm Loan Staff**

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**Conservation District**

Michelle Huntington, Douglas  
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**Crop Reporting Deadline - Fall Seeded and Perennial Crops**

All producers are reminded that the acreage reporting date for fall seeded crops for 2013 harvest, has changed. **This means your 2013 perennial hay crops, winter wheat, and range reporting deadline is Nov. 15, 2012!**

Please call for an appointment to certify your crops.

**November 15, 2012** – Perennial Forage, Fall Wheat, and other fall seeded small grains

**January 15, 2013** – Established stand alfalfa seed and fall alfalfa seed

**July 15, 2013** – Spring alfalfa seed, spring barley, corn, beans, oats, sugar beets, sunflowers, spring wheat, and all other spring crops.

If it is inconvenient for you to come to the office, please give us a call and we will email the reports to you for signature. Filing an accurate and timely report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of benefits for a variety of Farm Service Agency programs.

**NAP Coverage Deadline for 2013**

The deadline to purchase 2013 Non-Insurable Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for biennial and perennial forage crops, regardless of intended use, is **December 1, 2012**. This includes the following crops; mixed forage hay, grass for grazing, grass for hay, rangeland, honey and any fall seeded crops such as winter wheat. The application fee is \$250.00 per crop/pay type. Crops eligible for NAP coverage are those crops for which RMA crop insurance is not offered. Lack of meeting deadlines doesn't warrant a not offered status. This coverage is only for losses in excess of 50% of the normal yield.

Producers have until Monday, December 3, 2012, to purchase coverage this year because December 1 falls on a weekend. Purchasing a crop insurance policy is an easy way for producers to mitigate risk. The past few years have shown that natural disasters can severely impact an otherwise successful operation. Producers can have both NAP coverage and PRF coverage from crop insurance on their rangeland.

**Actual Production History (APH) Deadline Noninsured Assistance Program (NAP)**

2012 crop production must be reported by **July 15, 2013** in order to be used for 2013 Actual Production History (APH) payment yield purposes for a crop covered by a NAP policy. Failure to timely report production can have an adverse impact on the overall crop yield history and payments.

**Increased Guaranteed Loan Limit**

The Farm Service Agency has announced that the loan limit for the Guaranteed Loan Program will increase to \$1,302,000 on Oct. 1, 2012. The limit is adjusted annually based on data compiled by the National Agricultural Statistics Service. The lending limit increases every year according to an inflation index. The maximum combined guaranteed and direct farm loan indebtedness will also increase to \$1,602,000.

As a reminder, the one-time loan origination fee charged on FSA guaranteed Farm Ownership and Operating loans is 1.5 percent of the guaranteed portion of the loan. Producers should contact their local FSA County Offices with questions about farm loans.

## **2011 SURE Signup Announced**

Signup for the SURE Program for 2011 crop losses will begin **October 22, 2012** and will end **June 7, 2013**. This program was authorized beginning with the 2008 crop year and will be ending with losses occurring because of weather events through September 30, 2011. SURE is available to eligible producers on a farm or ranch that had:

- A policy or plan of insurance under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for all economically significant crops;
- Without a Secretarial Disaster Designation, individual producers in Converse and Natrona County may be eligible if the actual production on the farm is less than 50 percent of the normal production on the farm due to a natural disaster. A "farm" for SURE purposes means the entirety of all crop acreage in all counties that a producer planted or intended to be planted for harvest for normal commercial sale or on-farm livestock feeding, including native and improved grassland intended for haying.

Producers considered socially disadvantaged, a beginning farmer or rancher, or a limited resource farmer may be eligible for SURE without a policy or plan of insurance or NAP coverage.

## **Livestock Producers Affected by Disasters Urged to Keep Good Records**

Livestock producers affected by natural disasters, such as drought, are encouraged to keep thorough records of their livestock and feed losses, including additional expenses for such things as feed purchases because of lost supplies. Drought and heat affecting this area is causing economic consequences for ranchers and producers including cattle, sheep, bee keepers and farm-raised fish.

FSA recommends that owners and producers record all pertinent information of natural disaster consequences, including:

- Documentation of the number and kind of livestock that have died, supplemented if possible by photographs or video records of ownership and losses
- Dates of death supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts
- Costs of transporting livestock to safer grounds or to move animals to new pastures
- Feed purchases if supplies or grazing pastures are destroyed.

Producers are reminded that USDA's authority to operate the five disaster assistance programs authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill expired on Sept. 30, 2011. This includes SURE; the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP); the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP); the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP); and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP). Production losses due to disasters occurring after Sept. 30, 2011, are not eligible for disaster program coverage at this time.

## **USDA Announces Hispanic and Women Farmer and Rancher Claims Period Now**

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has announced that Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA in past decades can file claims between September 24, 2012 and March 25, 2013. The process offers a voluntary alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or female farmer and rancher who can prove that USDA denied their applications for loan or loan servicing assistance for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000.

As announced in February 2011, the voluntary claims process will make available at least \$1.33 billion for cash awards and tax relief payments, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief, to eligible Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers. There are no filing fees to participate in the program. The Department will continue reaching out to potential Hispanic and female claimants, around the country to get the word out to individuals who may be eligible for this program so they have the opportunity to participate.

Call center representatives can be reached at 1-888-508-4429. Claimants must register for a claims package (by calling the number or visiting the website) and the claims package will be mailed to claimants. All those interested in learning more or receiving information about the claims process and claims packages are encouraged to attend meetings in your communities about the claims process and contact the website or claims telephone number.

Website: [www.farmerclaims.gov](http://www.farmerclaims.gov)

Phone: **1-888-508-4429**

Claims Period: September 24, 2012 - March 25, 2013.

Independent legal services companies will administer the claims process and adjudicate the claims. Although there are no filing fees to participate and a lawyer is not required to participate in the claims process, persons seeking legal advice may contact a lawyer or other legal services provider. 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.

## **COC Election**

Producers in LAA2 watch your mailbox for the official county office committee election ballot. LAA2 includes all of Natrona County **north** of the Burlington Railroad line. Ballots will be mailed to all eligible voters on Nov. 5, 2012. If for some reason you don't receive a ballot, please notify the county FSA office. Leslie Hendry and Jack Wright are on the ballot this year. Completed and signed ballots must be returned to the county office by close of business on Dec.3, 2012.

***Don't Forget to Vote!***

## **Rural Youth Loans**

The Farm Service Agency 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 \$5,000.

### **Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:**

- Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien
- Be 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
- Be unable to get a loan from other sources
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above
- 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 members of socially disadvantaged groups. A socially disadvantaged applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities.

## **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. 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. 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 result in liquidated damages, calling the loan and denial of future farm-stored loans.

## **IRS Press Release – DROUGHT**

Sept. 25, 2012 - Farmers and ranchers who previously were forced to sell livestock due to drought, like the drought currently affecting much of the nation, have an extended period of time in which to replace the livestock and defer tax on any gains from the forced sales, the Internal Revenue Service announced today. Farmers and ranchers who, due to drought, sell more livestock than they normally would, may defer tax on the extra gains from those sales. To qualify, the livestock generally must be replaced within a four-year period. The IRS is authorized to extend this period if the drought continues.

The one-year extension of the replacement period announced today generally applies to capital gains realized by eligible farmers and ranchers on sales of livestock held for draft, dairy, or breeding purposes due to drought. Sales of other livestock, such as those raised for slaughter or held for sporting purposes, and poultry are not eligible.

The IRS is providing this relief to any farm located a county, parish, city, or district listed as suffering exceptional, extreme, or severe drought conditions by the National Drought Mitigation Center (NDMC), during any weekly period between Sept. 1, 2011 and Aug. 31, 2012. All or parts of 43 states are listed. Any county contiguous to a county listed by the NDMC also qualifies for this relief. As a result, farmers and ranchers in these areas whose drought sale replacement period was scheduled to expire at the end of this tax year, Dec. 31, 2012, in most cases, will now have until the end of their next tax year. Because the normal drought sale replacement period is four years, this extension immediately impacts drought sales that occurred during 2008. But because of previous drought-related extensions affecting some of these localities, the replacement periods for some drought sales before 2008 are also affected. Additional extensions will be granted if severe drought conditions persist.

Details on this relief, including a list of NDMC-designated counties, are available in Notice 2012-62, posted today on IRS gov. Details on reporting drought sales and other farm-related tax issues can be found in Publication 225, Farmer's Tax Guide, also available on the IRS web site.

**Appeal Process** – After an FSA official makes a decision on your request for USDA services or application, you will be sent a letter informing you of the decision and options you can pursue if you disagree.

**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.

**Power of Attorney** – For those who find it difficult to visit the county office personally because of work schedules, distance, health, etc., FSA has a power of attorney form available that enables you to designate another person to conduct your business at the office. If you are interested, please contact our office or any Farm Service Agency office near you for more information.

Selected Interest Rates for November 2012	
Farm Operating - Direct	1.125%
Farm Ownership - Direct	3.125%
Limited Resource	%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.5%
Emergency	2.125%
Farm Storage Facility – 7 year	1.125%
Farm Storage Facility – 10 year	1.750%
Farm Storage Facility – 12 year	2.0%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.125%

Dates to Remember	
Nov 5	County Committee ballots mailed
Nov 12	Veteran Day Federal Holiday
Nov 15	Crop Report Deadline – perennial /fall seeding & reporting hay production
Nov 22	Thanksgiving Day Federal Holiday
Dec 3	NAP purchase Deadline
Dec 3	Last day to return COC ballots
Dec 10	County Committee Meeting - election
Dec 25	Christmas Day Federal Holiday
Anytime	Continuous CRP
Anytime	Report land ownership or lease changes

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