

September 2013



Converse/Natrona County FSA Updates

Sept 16 – DCP & Crop Reports
Sept 17 – Douglas Women in Range Workshop
Sept 18 – Converse County Local Work Group
Sept 24 – Casper Women in Range Workshop

Sept 26 – Douglas Drought Contingency Workshop
November 15 – 2014 Grazing Crop Reports
December 2 – final day to vote for COC
December 9 - next COC meeting to count ballots

Natrona/Converse County FSA Office

Casper Service Center

Office Hours: 8:00 am - 4:30
pm

www.fsa.usda.gov

Phone: 307-261-5436
Fax: 307-261-5435

County Committee

Jarad Vollman, Chair
Neil Forgey V Chair
Leslie Hendry
Philip Johnson
Kem Nicolayson

County Executive Director:

Donna Sue Willey

Program Technicians:

Wanda McLean
Deena McDaniels

Douglas Service Center

NRCS Dist

Conservationist: Kenny
Wolffley

Consrv District Manager:

Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) Signup – September 9 thru November 7

A lack of moisture, over the last two years, has caused producers in Converse and Natrona Counties to suffer from the effects of severe drought conditions. Farms and ranches experiencing severe drought conditions may be eligible for cost-share assistance under ECP. This disaster program is administered by the USDA, Farm Service Agency (FSA), which provides cost-share assistance if the damage is so severe that water available for livestock has been reduced below normal to the extent that they cannot survive without additional water.

A producer qualifying for ECP assistance may receive cost shares not to exceed 75 percent of the cost of installing eligible permanent measures. Cost sharing for temporary measures is based on 50 percent of the total eligible cost. Cost-share assistance is limited to \$200,000 per person or legal entity per natural disaster. Approved practices and measures may include:

- installing pipelines or other facilities for livestock water
- constructing and deepening wells for livestock water
- developing springs or seeps for livestock water
- temporary water hauling only for grazing areas having adequate livestock watering facilities before the drought or have not hauled water in 3 out of the last 10 years and there are no other means of obtaining water. Water cannot be hauled to earthen structures.

Producers who have experienced severe drought conditions requiring outside assistance to provide supplemental emergency livestock water may contact this office and requests for assistance will be accepted for 60 days starting September 9.

To be eligible for cost shares, practices shall not be started until a request has first been filed at CountyOffice and an onsite inspection of the problem area has been made by the County Committee (COC) or its representative. There is a financial risk if the practice is started before

Lisa Ogden

Douglas Service Center
Phone: 307-358-3050

approval. COC will review the inspection December 9. When the COC considers ECP application approvals for cost shares, permanent practices shall be given higher priority. Call for more information.

Farm Loan Manager:
Dave Lengel

**NRCS Dist
Conservationist:**
Tim Schroeder

Consrv District Manager:
Michelle Huntington

Filing for 2013 Crop Losses, Including NAP Grazing

Only the CCC-576 Notice of Loss can be used to report failed/lower production acreage and prevented planting. It may be completed by any producer with an interest in the covered crop. Timely filing a Notice of Loss is required for ALL CROPS INCLUDING GRASSES. For losses on crops covered by the Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), you must file a CCC-576 in the County FSA Office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent. When hay or grain loss is sustained an appraisal may be required. Appraisals must be performed prior to grazing! Even if you believe your losses are less than 50%, you can still file a notice of loss as there may be other programs available to provide loss assistance, at a later date.

Acreage Reports for 2013 & 2014

2013 acreage reporting deadline is **September 15** due to changes in some reporting dates. Please contact us before coming in, if you have not reported. Remember a crop report is a requirement for NAP.

2014 acreage reporting deadlines for Perennial Forage (hay and grazing), PRF, Fall Wheat, and all other Fall-Seeded Small Grains is **November 15, 2013!** Spring seeded crops and the CRP deadline is July 15. Late-filed fees will apply to 2014 crops NOT timely filed! For more information on FSA crop reporting requirements and other programs, visit your local FSA office or visit us online at www.fsa.usda.gov/wy.

DCP & CRP WEED & PEST CONTROL

DCP and CRP participants are required to comply with Wyoming State noxious weed laws as determined by the County Weed & Pest. In addition, participants are required to control other weeds, insects, rodents, or other pests that pose a threat to existing cover or adversely impact other landowners in the area. It's amazing how Russian Thistle can sprout and grow even as dry as it is this year. Before they blow, weed infestations need to be shredded. Failure to comply can result in penalties applied to the annual payment or termination of the contract.

Drought Contingency Plan Workshops for USFS and BLM Permittees

The Wyoming Department of Agriculture will be hosting a series of workshops across the state to help USFS and BLM permittees develop drought contingency plans for their grazing permits. Partners for this project include the Wyoming Stock Growers Association, the Wyoming Association of Conservation District, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service and the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service.

The goals of the workshops are to help participants understand the role drought contingency plans play with respect to their grazing permit and the importance of developing a plan. Participants will also learn about improving dialogue with federal agencies and better understanding the financial impacts of proactive planning for drought by comparing cost-savings of contingency plan to costs for emergency feed, transportation, etc. Presentations and panel discussions will provide an opportunity to hear from other permittees about best management practices and resources in their own region to help address

these issues. Agenda topics will include:

- The financial impacts of proactive drought planning
- Basic components of drought contingency plans - sample plans, agency policies and other factors
- Communication strategies between permittees and federal agencies
- What's in your agency file?
- Local agency staff and permittees will discuss effective drought contingency strategies
- Learn more about the resources in your area to address range management and monitoring assistance, technical expertise, and the roles of your local Cooperative Extension Service and Conservation Districts.

More information is available on the WDA website at <http://wyagric.state.wy.us/divisions/nrp/mediation-program/drought-workshops> or contact Lucy Pauley by phone (307) 777-8788 or email lucy.pauley@wyo.gov. The workshops are made possible in part by a grant from the Western Center for Risk Management, through work supported by USDA/NIFA under Award Number 2010-49200-06203.

Workshop Dates (all programs run from 2:00 – 5:30 p.m.)

September 24: Rawlins – Carbon County Library
September 26: Douglas – Wyoming State Fairgrounds
October 1: Buffalo
October 2: Sundance – Crook County Library

Risk Management Agency (RMA) and FSA

The RMA and FSA work together to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse of the Crop Insurance Program. FSA will again be assisting RMA and insurance providers in monitoring crop conditions throughout the growing season. FSA will refer all suspected cases of fraud, waste and abuse of Crop Insurance Program to RMA. Producers may report suspected cases of fraud, waste, and abuse to their local FSA County Office, RMA office, or Office of Investigative General (OIG). FSA will also assist with auditing claims with RMA.

Compliance Spot Checks

Compliance spot checks will be conducted on 2013 crops. Instead of locally selecting farms, contracts, deficiency loans, etc. for review, a nationwide selection of producers is employed. Spot check selections are to be conducted based on a producer's participation in Conservation Reserve Program, Direct and Counter-cyclical Program, Loan Deficiency Program and other programs. For more information about the spot check selection procedure, feel free to contact your local Farm Service Agency office for additional clarification.

Adjusted Gross Income

USDA and the Internal Revenue Service have established an electronic information exchange process for verifying compliance with the adjusted gross income (AGI) provisions for farm programs. Written consent is required from each producer or payment recipient for the tax review process. No actual tax data will be included in the report that IRS sends to FSA.

This ensures that payments are not issued to producers whose AGI exceeds certain limits. The limits set in the 2008 Farm Bill are \$500,000 nonfarm average AGI for commodity and disaster programs; \$750,000 farm average AGI for direct payments; and \$1 million nonfarm average AGI for conservation programs. Starting with 2012, a combined overall income exceeding \$1 million excludes participation in DCP or ACRE.

Participants in CCC programs subject to average AGI rules must submit form CCC-933 to their local FSA County Office to avoid interruption of program benefits. This form may be obtained from local FSA and NRCS offices or online

at: <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/mainervlet>.

Actively Engaged

USDA has amended 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 when 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;
- The total direct payments received by the legal entity and each of the members can't exceed \$40,000.

Receiving FSA Payments

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

Farm or Ranch Change Notifications

Please notify this office of any changes to your farming or ranching operation, or changes to your entity which would cause payment limitation changes. New leases, expired leases, land purchases, sales and trades should be reported in order to keep your farm records up to date. Notifying us **before** coming in to do your acreage report, would be most appreciated by the staff and could speed up the process.

Farm Operating Loans and Microloans

FSA's Direct Farm Operating loans are a valuable resource to establish, maintain and strengthen your farm or ranch. Microloans are direct farm operating loans with a shortened application process and reduced paperwork designed to meet the needs of smaller, non-traditional, and niche type operations. Apprentice and mentorship programs, non-farm business experience, and farm labor experience are acceptable alternative solutions for helping to meet farm experience and managerial requirements. Operating loans may be used to purchase items such as:

- Fuel, farm chemicals, insurance and other operating costs, including family living expenses
- Minor improvements or repairs to buildings
- Refinance certain farm-related debts, excluding real estate
- Livestock and feed
- Farm equipment

Operating loan funds cannot be used to finance nonfarm enterprises, including earthworms, exotic birds, tropical fish, dogs or horses used for non-farm purposes (racing, pleasure, show and boarding). There is no minimum loan amount. The maximum loan amount for a Microloan is \$35,000. The maximum loan amount for a Direct Farm Operating Loan is \$300,000. There is no down payment requirement.

GovDelivery

The USDA Farm Service Agency offices are now communicating electronically to save time and taxpayer dollars. Producers can now enroll in the new GovDelivery email system that provides notices, newsletters and electronic reminders instead of a hard copy through the postal mail. FSA, like many organizations is working smarter and more efficiently. County Committee ballots and all program or loan-related documents will continue to be mailed to all eligible producers.

Producers can subscribe to receive free e-mail updates by going to <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe>.

Farm Storage Facility Loans

The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFLP) 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 Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) loaning 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 U.S. Treasury Department.

The initial 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. For more information about FSFL please visit your FSA county office or www.fsa.usda.gov.

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).