

Natrona/ Converse County



Casper Service Center

5880 Enterprise Dr. Ste 100
Casper, WY 82609
Phone: 307-261-5436
Fax: 855-415-3428

County Committee

Jarad Vollman, Chair
Leslie Hendry, V Chair
Lee Moore
Philip Johnson

Kem Nicolaysen

County Executive Director

Donna Sue Willey

Program Technicians

Wanda McLean

Deena McDaniels

Dist. Conservationist

Kenny Wolfley

Conservation Dist. Manager

Lisa Ogden

Douglas Service Center

911 S Wind River Dr
Douglas, WY 82633
Phone: 307-358-3050

Farm Loan Manager

Dave Lengel

Dist. Conservationist

Tim Schroeder

Conservation Dist. Manager

Michelle Huntington

Livestock Disaster Programs

The Livestock Forage Program (LFP) provides compensation to eligible livestock producers due to drought or fire in both Converse and Natrona County. The Drought Monitor determines county eligibility; producers do not need to prove a loss. If you owned livestock and had risk in the land they were grazing in 2012 and/or 2013, you may receive compensation. LFP payments for drought are equal to 60 percent of the monthly feed cost and Converse and Natrona producers are receiving four months of payments for both 2012 and 2013, at roughly \$120 per cow. Applicants will need to complete acreage reports for 2012 and 2013, and provide documentation of grazing acres and livestock inventory numbers. Lender inventory sheets, preg test and shearing invoices are best. Leases and proof of owned property are also required.

Due to the heavy workload of this program, please call for an appointment and we will also mail or email you the information you need to bring with you to the appointment.

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) covers eligible livestock losses back to Oct. 1, 2011. LIP provides compensation for 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. Livestock Death Loss Documentation:

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 must include the number and kind of livestock that have died, supplemented if possible by such items as: dated photographs or video records to document the loss, 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.

Eligible livestock for both programs includes: Beef cattle, Dairy cattle, Bison, Sheep, Swine, Horses, and Other Livestock as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture that are maintained for commercial use as part of a farming or ranching operation. Sign-up ends January 30, 2015.

Filing A Notice Of Loss

The CCC-576, Notice of Loss, is 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.

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 Fee Waivers

The 2014 Farm Bill has authorized a NAP service fee waiver for Socially Disadvantaged (SDA) or Beginning Farmers or Ranchers (BFR). Beginning with the 2014 crop year, service fees for NAP coverage have been waived for these producers. A refund of NAP service fees has been authorized for producers who have filed CCC-860 certification. SDA groups mean women, American Indians, Native Alaskans or Hawaiians, Hispanics, Blacks or Asian, not inclusive. BFR means an individual, entity or joint operation that has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years and substantially participates in the operation. Limited Resource producers have always been eligible for waived NAP fees. For limited resource, the Gross Farm Sales limit has been raised to \$176,800 per year. The Adjusted Gross Income for Converse County must be less than \$31,804 and \$28,275 for Natrona County. Contact your local office at 1-866-596-447 if you think you are eligible for a NAP refund.

Continuous CRP

The Continuous Conservation Reserve Program is a private lands environmental improvement program that allows participants the opportunity to enroll acreages in conservation practices that will reduce soil erosion, improve water and soil quality and provide habitat and food sources for wildlife. Continuous CRP program participation is voluntary. Eligible landowners enter into contracts that range from 10 to 15 years in length. In return, the landowners will receive annual rental and maintenance payments, incentive payments for certain activities, and cost share for establishment.

To be eligible for enrollment in the Continuous CRP, participants and acreage must meet certain requirements. Provided the eligibility requirements are met, FSA will automatically accept enrollments of acreage into Continuous CRP. Landowners may enroll in the program at any time during the year. For more information on Continuous CRP enrollments, please contact your local FSA office or visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/facts/html/crpcont03.htm>

Acreage Reports for 2014 Crops

2014 acreage reporting deadlines for Perennial Forage (hay and grazing), PRF, Fall Wheat, and all other Fall-Seeded Small Grains is November 15, 2014. Spring seeded crops and the CRP deadline was July 15. Late-filed fees will **NOT** 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.

Adjusted Gross Income

USDA and the IRS 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 \$900,000, the limit set in the 2014 Farm Bill. Participants in CCC programs subject to average AGI rules must submit form CCC-941 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>.

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, and 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. That is why this is the first mailed newsletter you have seen in some time. 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> or contacting the county office.

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.

2014 County Committee Election

Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters around November 3 for voters in the southern part of Natrona County and north of the river in Converse County. December 1 is the last day to return voted ballots to the county office, or postmarked. Please take some time to vote and select your representative on the County Committee.

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 or Livestock Forage Program would be most appreciated by the staff and could speed up the process.

Natrona/Converse County FSA
5880 Enterprise Dr, Ste 100
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CED Retirement

I will be retired when you receive this newsletter. After 27 years of working for the Farm Service Agency, it is time for someone younger to take over the reins. I want to be able to spend more time with my grandchildren and enjoy more free time. I want to thank you all for making this job so enjoyable and fulfilling. I will definitely miss working with the most wonderful people in the world, farmers and ranchers. Thanks again, Sue

Temporary Phone Change

Due to the heavy workload from the Disaster Programs and the CED retirement, we are forced to initiate a change in our phone service. When calling this office, you will soon be directed to please leave a voice message, instead of Deena or Wanda answering. They can be much more productive by setting aside part of the day for returning phone calls, instead of being interrupted throughout the day. Please schedule an appointment, except to drop off paperwork. We thank you for your cooperation with this new procedure and will discontinue it as soon as possible.

DATES TO REMEMBER

September 12 – next County Committee Meeting (subject to change)
November 15 – Crop reporting deadline for fall seeded and perennial forage crops
January 15, 2015 – deadline for 2012 and 2013 Livestock Forage Prog

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or e-mail at program.intake@usda.gov.

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Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities and wish to file either an EEO or program complaint, please contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish). Persons with disabilities, who wish to file a program complaint, please see information above on how to contact us by mail directly or by email. If you require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) please contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).