



United States Department of Agriculture
Niobrara County Service Center

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April 2010

Emergency Livestock Assistance Program

May 5, 2010 is the final day to apply for benefits under the Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP) due to severe grasshopper infestation in 2009. Livestock producers who lost actual grazing days during the period of May 1 thru October 10 can receive a payment equal to 60 % of the cost of feed for the covered livestock or the value of the lost grazing whichever is smaller. Producers could also receive compensation for up to 60% of additional costs associated with providing feed for livestock. Examples of additional costs include purchasing or transporting additional feed above normal quantities or leasing additional pasture.

To be eligible to receive payments under ELAP applicants must have had crop insurance or Non Insured Crop Assistance Program (NAP) coverage on all commodities on all farms in which the producer has an interest, except grazing. This requirement can be waived for socially disadvantaged, limited resource, or beginning farmers/ranchers.

Eligible grazing land includes:

State or federal land, if either of the following applies -the lessee is responsible for the upkeep of fences, wells, or other maintenance; OR the grazing land is leased for cash or fixed amount for an established grazing period.

Privately owned, cash or share leased land.

Ineligible land includes land that is leased on a basis of weight gain; cost per head, per day or month; or on an AUM-only basis, when the lessee incurs no additional expenses for maintenance of wells, fences, etc.

There are no late filed provisions for ELAP and any application received after the deadline cannot be approved.

Acresage Reporting

The acresage reporting deadline is fast approaching. Filing an accurate acresage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acresage and prevented planting acresage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs.

Failed acresage must be reported within 15 days of the disaster event and before disposition of the crop.

Prevented planting must be reported no later than 15 days after the final planting date.

Acresage reports are required for most FSA programs. The deadline to report acresage is July 1 for all crops and land uses

2010 DCP Signup

Enrollment for the 2010 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) and Average Crop Revenue Enhancement (ACRE) option has begun and will continue through June 1, 2010. USDA urges producers to make use of the eDCP automated website to sign up, or producers can visit any USDA Service Center to complete their 2010 DCP contract. Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. For 2010, eligible producers may request to receive advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment. USDA will issue advance direct payments beginning Dec. 1, 2009. June 1, 2010 is the deadline to obtain all signatures on the contract.

DCP/ACRE Compliance Reminder

All producers participating in the 2009 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) are reminded of the requirement that all DCP base acres must be protected from wind and water erosion and the propagation of weeds.

Approved vegetative covers include annual, biennial or perennial grasses and legumes. The cover must be sufficient to keep soil losses within acceptable limits. Additional measures including plant residue and volunteer stands are approved under specific circumstances.

Weed growth on the DCP base acres must be controlled to prevent the spread of weeds. Control practices may include mechanical and/or chemical measures. Control measures must be implemented timely to achieve the most effective control of weed growth.

Also, don't forget the regulations concerning the number of acres of Fruits and Vegetables (FAV's), including dry beans, that may be grown without penalty or payment reduction. To avoid a payment reduction, liquidated damages penalty or contract termination, FAV acres may not exceed the non-contract acres for the farm.

Reporting Livestock Loss

Livestock producers are reminded of the deadlines for applying for benefits through the Livestock Indemnity Program and Emergency Livestock Assistance Program. These programs compensate livestock owners and contract growers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather, including losses due to hurricanes, floods, blizzards, certain diseases, wildfires, extreme heat and extreme cold.

For 2010 and subsequent years producers must file a notice of loss within 30 days of the date loss is apparent and an application for payment within 30 days of the end of the calendar year.

Producers will need to provide verifiable or reliable records to prove livestock inventories and losses. Adequate documentation must be provided that proves the death of eligible livestock occurred as a direct result of an eligible adverse weather event in the calendar year for which benefits are being requested. The documentation must provide sufficient data that identifies the quantity and the livestock kind/type and weight range.

You must provide the committee with enough information for them to make a decision. Document what happened and when it happened. If you do not provide enough information to prove the loss was due to adverse weather the committee will not be able to approve your application. FSA will be randomly spot-checking Notices of Loss.

NAP Records

Production records for individual crops need to be filed with your FSA office to establish an approved NAP yield. If this is the first year you participated in NAP, you can provide production and acreage information from prior years to establish your yield. If you participated in NAP in previous years, you must report your production and acreage on a yearly basis to keep your yield up-to-date. Records submitted must be reliable or verifiable and need to show crop disposition. We recommend producers submit 2009 production records as soon as harvest is complete. **All 2009 production records must be submitted by July 1, 2010.**

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.** The timely filing of 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) 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.

Spousal Signatures

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 by either spouse.

Controlled Substance

Any person who is 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.

Wool and Mohair LDPs

Producers who file for a Loan Deficiency Payment for their wool or mohair, must sign a CCC-633EZ (page 1) before they lose beneficial interest in the crop. Producers can then submit an LDP request (CCC-633EZ page 2) for benefits at any time during the LDP availability period before or after losing beneficial interest. The crop year for wool, mohair, and unshorn pelts begins on January 1st and runs through December 31st.

From the Natural Resource Conservation Service

Hello Niobrara County! My name is Robin Allen and I'm the new District Conservationist for NRCS. I'm very happy to be here in Lusk. I had the opportunity to be an intern for NRCS here during the summer of 2004 and I'm glad to be back to work with everyone here at the USDA Service Center. Since my time as an intern here I have earned my Masters degree from Colorado State University and have been full time with the NRCS for the past 5 years. Most recently, I was the Soil Conservationist in Wheatland. I'm excited to learn about conservation in Niobrara County and get the chance to meet and work with the landowners here.

My husband, Tim, and I are looking forward to getting to know the area and being a part of this community. We bring with us three horses, two dogs and a cat. Together we enjoy hunting, fishing, taking our horses to the mountains, home improvement projects and gardening. We have a small place just west of Lusk that should keep us busy. We have never had so much room for a garden and can't wait for warmer weather to get it started.

The coming of warm weather also means the start of construction on many conservation projects. If you have a current NRCS contract, please take time to review you plans and requirements prior to construction. If you have questions or would like to make changes, please contact us. I would also like take the opportunity to remind everyone that NRCS is currently holding a sign-up for the national Sage Grouse Initiative. The purpose of this Initiative is to provide assistance to producers to implement practices that will alleviate or reduce threats to sage-grouse habitat. The deadline for this sign-up is May 14. If you are interested in that, or any of our other programs, please call or come by our office.

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Important Dates to Remember	
April 26	Stewardship Week
May 5	Final Day to Apply for Emergency Livestock Assistance Program
May 14	Tree Show & Arbor Day Celebration
June 1	Final Day to sign for DCP/ACRE contract
July 1	Final Day to report Crops
July 1	Final Day to report 2009 Production for NAP
Continues	Farm Storage Facility Loans
Continues	Continuous CRP Signup

Grasshopper Spray Program

The Niobrara County Weed and Pest Board will be taking applications for grasshopper spraying on April 26 to 30 and May 3 to 7. For more information contact the Weed and Pest office at 334-3373.

Farm Safety

Flowing grain in a storage bin or gravity-flow wagon is like quicksand; it can kill quickly. It takes less than five seconds for a person caught in flowing grain to be trapped. The mechanical aspects of grain handling equipment, also presents a real danger. Augers, power take offs, and other moving parts can grab you or the clothing you might be wearing.

These hazards, along with pinch points and missing shields, are dangerous enough for adults; not to mention children. It is always advisable to keep children a safe distance from operating farm equipment. Always use extra caution when backing or maneuvering farm machinery. Insure everyone is visibly clear and accounted for before machinery is engaged.

Your friends at USDA want all farmers and ranchers to have a productive crop year, and that begins with putting safety first.

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