



Niobrara County Service Center

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Niobrara Conservation District

Board Members

Terry Browder

Matt Dockery

Kevin Gaukel

Mark Groh

Dale Jordan

Staff

Lisa Shaw

Heidi Sturman

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Staff

Robin Allen

JoAnn Wade

Farm Service Agency

County Committee

Bryan Bruch

Monty Finley

Robert Freeman

Advisor

Carol Geisinger

Staff

Tommy Stephens, CED

Kimberly Nusbaum, PT

David Lengel, FLM

January 2011

County Committee Election Results

Congratulations to Bryan Bruch, who was re-elected to represent farmers from LAA 2 on the county committee. Bryan was elected to his third consecutive term. The election results for Local Administrative Area 2 are:

- Bryan Bruch — Elected to the county committee (COC),
- Matt Dockery — 1st alternate to COC,

FSA appreciates all the voters who took the time to participate in the election.

SURE Signup

Signup for the 2009 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) begins January 10, 2011. SURE provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disasters. For SURE, all crops must be covered by crop insurance, NAP or eligible for waivers.

A farm enrolled in SURE is eligible when either:

- a portion of the farm is located in a county covered by a qualifying natural disaster declaration (USDA Secretarial Declarations only) or a contiguous county; or,
- the actual production is less than 50% of the normal production.

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.

Special Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact the county FSA office staff directly or by phone.

County Office Committee Minutes Available to the Public

The minutes to the regular session of all County Office Committee (COC) meetings are available to the public in the county office.

Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. FSA administers this program for USDA.

All individuals who are not U.S. citizens, and have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA with 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form (FSA-153) could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, Realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

Farming Operation Changes

If you have bought or sold land, or if you have added or dropped rented land from your operation, make sure you report the changes to the office as soon as possible. You need to provide a copy of your deed or recorded land contract for purchased property. Failure to maintain accurate records with FSA on all land you have an interest in can lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties. Making the record changes now will save you time in the spring. Update signature authorization when changes in the operation occur. Producers are reminded to contact the office of a change in operations on a farm so that records can be kept current and accurate.

Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation

Landowners and operators are reminded that in order to receive payments from USDA, compliance with Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions are required. Farmers with HEL determined soils are reminded of tillage, crop residue, and rotation requirements as specified per their conservation plan.

Producers are to notify the USDA Farm Service Agency prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to insure compliance. Failure to obtain advance approval for any of these situations can result in the loss of eligibility and all Federal payments.

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 FSA office near you for more information.

Bank Account Changes

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.

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.

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.

Deadline for Loans on 2010 Small Grains

March 31, 2011 is the deadline to apply for LDP - Loan Deficiency Payment or MAL - Marketing Assistance Loans on small grains and small grain hay crops harvested in 2010.

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.

Farm Loan Programs

The Farm Service Agency is committed to providing family farmers with loans to meet their farm credit needs. If you are having trouble getting the credit you need for your farm, or regularly borrow from FSA, direct and guaranteed loans are currently available. Ask your lender about an FSA loan guarantee if you've had a setback and your lender is reluctant to extend or renew your loan.

LDP Deadline on Unshorn Lamb Pelts

Eligible producers have until January 31, 2010 to apply for Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP) for unshorn pelts produced during the 2010 crop year. To be eligible, producers must a) have beneficial interest in the pelts, b) own the lamb for at least 30 calendar days before the date of slaughter and c) sell the unshorn lamb for immediate slaughter. Producers must also comply with wetland conservation and highly erodible land conservation provisions on all lands they operate or have interest in. To qualify for payment, pelts must have been produced by an eligible producer from live unshorn lambs of domestic origin in the United States.

IRS Form 1099-G

Producers annually receive CCC-1099-Gs detailing payments producers have received from the Commodity Credit Corporation. The annual report of program payments on CCC-1099-Gs is a service intended to help our customers report taxable income. It is not intended to replace the producers' responsibilities to report income to IRS.

FSA staff cannot interpret IRS regulations or advise producers about which payments to report on their income tax returns. However, county office staff can review payments for accuracy.

Livestock Disaster Programs

Losses of livestock due to adverse weather must be reported to the FSA Office within 30 days of when the loss is apparent by filing a Notice of Loss application. A filed Notice of Loss must be finalized by completing an Application for Payment by **January 30, 2011** for 2010 losses.

Applications for livestock losses require documentation of beginning and ending inventory, records showing the date of each death for normal death loss and show death losses due to the weather event, along with records showing the number of livestock in inventory on the date of the weather event.

Disaster Assistance Programs / Risk Management

FSA disaster assistance programs include:

- Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program
- Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP)
- Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)
- Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP)
- Tree Assistance Program (TAP)

To be eligible for SURE, TAP, and ELAP, producers must purchase catastrophic risk protection insurance for all insurable crops, and NAP coverage for non-insurable crops. Farm-Raised Fish means all fish being produced for sale by an eligible producer. In the case of honey, the term "farm" means all bees and beehives in all counties that are intended to be harvested for a honey crop by the eligible producer.

Producers, who meet the definition of Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource Producer, or Beginning Farmer or Rancher, do not have to meet this risk management purchase requirement.

Oil, Gas, Wind and Mineral Leases

Many areas in Wyoming are seeing increased interest in resource development. If you are approached and considering entering into agreements regarding your property and resources; you are strongly encouraged to contact an attorney prior to signature. Agreements are legally binding and often have lengthy duration. Make sure you protect your land, your family, and yourself. If you participate in USDA programs, we also recommend that you contact your local offices prior to signature to assist you in assessing the impact of the lease on your program participation.

FSA Financial Inquiries Web Site

The USDA Farm Service Agency's Financial Inquiries Web Site is an Internet-based service that allows agricultural producers and other customers to generate reports showing their current and historical financial information related to FSA programs. Authorized customers may view summary and detailed information about specific payments received, collections paid, outstanding debt (excluding loans) and information reported on the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) Form 1099. The Web site is only available to registered e-Authentication users.

Important Dates to Remember

January 17	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Holiday - Office Closed
January 31	Final Day to apply for 2010 LDP, LFP, LIP, & ELAP Benefits
April 1	Final day to purchase NAP on Spring Seeded Crops
Continues	Continuous CRP Signup

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its program and activities 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 program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for 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 to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Niobrara Conservation District Newsletter

Local Student Wins WACD Poster Contest

The annual Conservation Poster Contest provides kindergarten through twelfth grade students an opportunity to convey their thoughts about soil, water and related natural resource issues through art. William Fish, a fifth grader from Lusk Elementary Middle School was chosen as the local and State winner. He accepted an award at the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts convention held in Worland last month. This year "Conservation Habits = Healthy Habitats" was the theme for stewardship week and the poster contest. His poster was judged on four criteria: Conservation Message 50%, Visual Effectiveness 30%, Originality 10% and Universal Appeal 10%. William's poster has moved on to the national contest in Nashville TN where winners will be announced in February.

Community Enhancement Grant Applications Due

Each year the Niobrara Conservation District provides trees and funding for tree and landscaping enhancements on public lands for public benefit. Many of the parks, cemeteries and sites around the county have been enhanced with this program. Applications are due February 1, 2011. No late or incomplete applications will be accepted. Some of the projects we have completed in the past are the Museum, Chamberlain Square near the Post Office, Library, Schools, Washington Park, North Park, Van Tassell Town Park and the Fairgrounds. Please stop in to receive your application soon. Applications will be reviewed at the board meeting on February 3rd and contracts issued in March with the trees to arrive the end of April.

**TIME TO START THINKING ABOUT TREE PLANTING!
ORDER YOUR TREES EARLY FOR BEST SELECTION! ☺
2011 TREE ORDER FORMS AVAILABLE AT THE OFFICE.**

NIOBRARA COUNTY FSA OFFICE
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