



# NEWSLETTER



## Niobrara County Service Center

905 S. Main; Lusk, WY 82225

Phone: (307) 334-3454

Fax: (855) 415-3433

### 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*

Clinton Anderson

JoAnn Wade

### Farm Service Agency

#### *County Committee*

Robert Freeman

Monty Finley

Jason ZumBrunnen

#### *Advisor*

Carol Geisinger

#### *Staff*

Tommy Stephens, CED

Kimberly Nusbaum, PT

David Lengel, FLM

April 2014

The 2014 Farm Bill included livestock disaster programs and provides retroactive authority to cover eligible losses back to Oct. 1, 2011.

The **Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP)** provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who have suffered grazing losses due to drought or fire. LFP payments for drought are equal to 60 percent of the monthly feed cost for up to a five month period (depending on drought severity). LFP payments for fire on federally managed rangeland are equal to 50 percent of the monthly feed cost for the number of days the producer is prohibited from grazing the managed rangeland, not to exceed 180 calendar days. Based on the severity of the drought in 2012 and its lingering effects in 2013 Niobrara County livestock producers are eligible for payments for both years. Applicants will need to provide documentation of grazing acres and documents that show livestock inventory numbers.

The **Livestock Indemnity Payment Program (LIP)** provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who have suffered 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. 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.

The **Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)** provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish. ELAP covers losses due to an eligible adverse weather or loss condition, including blizzards and

wildfires, as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture that occurs on or after Oct. 1, 2011. ELAP covers losses that are not covered under LFP or LIP.

### **Acreage Certification**

Producers are reminded to certify their 2014 acreage for permanent and fall seeded crops. Filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs. Failed acreage 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. Acreage reports are required for many Farm Service Agency programs. Crop acreage reports must be certified by the **July 15<sup>th</sup>**.

### **County Committee Election Results**

Congratulations to Jason ZumBrunnen, who was elected to represent farmers from LAA 3 on the COC. Also receiving votes were Neal Wurdeman (1<sup>st</sup> Alternate), Barbara Kilmer (2<sup>nd</sup> Alternate), and Paul Luker. We appreciate all the voters who took the time to participate in the election.

### **Farm Loan Program Information**

Farm Service Agency (FSA) has loan programs that could help farmers and ranchers experiencing financial problems in today's economy of tight profit margins. Several types of loan programs are offered through FSA. Under the Guaranteed Loan program, FSA guarantees farm ownership, term operating loans, and lines of credit used for annual operating through conventional agricultural lenders for guarantees up to 95%. The guarantee generally allows the conventional lender to provide the applicant with longer terms and lower rates of interest. All applicants must meet certain qualifying criteria to be eligible for guarantees. Farmers and ranchers interested in Guaranteed Loans should apply directly with a conventional lender, who arranges for the guarantee.

For those unable to qualify for a Guaranteed Loan, FSA offers Direct Loans, which are made and serviced by FSA officials. Funding is limited for Direct Loans, and applicants must sometimes wait until funds are available. To qualify for a Direct Farm Ownership or Operating Loan, the applicant must meet eligibility criteria and have sufficient repayment ability and loan collateral. FSA will work with you to analyze your situation, provide technical assistance, and tailor loans to meet your needs.

Youth between the ages of 10 and 21 may also apply for a direct loan up to \$5,000 associated with their 4-H, FFA, or other youth organization activities.

Farm Service Agency is an Equal Credit Opportunity Lender. Beginning farmers and members of traditionally underserved gender and ethnic groups are encouraged to apply for guaranteed and/or direct loan assistance from FSA. Each year, farm ownership and operating loan funds are temporarily set-aside to meet the needs of beginning farmers and traditionally underserved groups.

### **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.

### **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.

### **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.

### **Foreign Buyers Notification**

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report new holdings or their changes in holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency 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 within 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, real estate agents, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

### **NAP Production Records**

NAP producers, now is the time to submit production evidence for your 2013 crops. Submitting production evidence for harvested crops, such as bale counts and weights are necessary to maintain accurate yields for coverage. Accurate yields are essential in calculating payments for losses. You can still submit previous year's records if you forgot in the past and those values will be used for your 2014 approved yield. The deadline to report previous year's production is **July 15<sup>th</sup>**.

### **Reporting NAP Losses**

The CCC-576, Notice of Loss, is used to report crop losses and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. Timely filing a Notice of Loss is required on 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.

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 apply to all programs). Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities and wish to file a program complaint must contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) must contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

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](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 at (202) 690-7442 or e-mail at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

<b>Important Dates to Remember</b>	
May 26	Memorial Day Holiday – Office Closed
July 15	Crop Reporting Deadline
Within 15 days of noticing Loss	File CCC - 576 NAP Notice of Loss

### **Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation Compliance**

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.

### **Controlled Substance**

Any person 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.

NIOBRARA COUNTY FSA OFFICE  
 PO BOX 720  
 LUSK, WY 82225