

December 2013



Sheridan-Johnson County FSA Updates

Sheridan-Johnson County FSA Office

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Johnson County Office Day:
First Wednesday of each
month.

Buffalo USDA Service Center

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FSA Office Personnel:

Linda Benzel, CED
Janice Wheeler, PT

County Committee Members:

William White, Chairperson
Juaquin Michelena, Vice
Chairperson
Susan Moyes, Regular Member
Raymon Turk, Regular Member
Steve Schuette; Regular
Member

2013 COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

New County Committee Election Ballots to be Mailed

The County Committee Election ballots that were mailed to producers on Nov. 4 were incorrectly printed with the producer's name and address on the back of the ballot. County committee elections must use a secret ballot so the misprinted ballots cannot be used. Please destroy or recycle the misprinted ballot. If you have already voted, your ballot will be destroyed unopened.

New ballots will be mailed to producers on December 20, 2013. These ballots will indicate that they are the corrected ballot in several places, including on the outside of the mailing, on the ballot and on the outside of the return envelope.

The corrected ballot must be returned to the Sherida-Johnson County FSA Office or postmarked by January 17, 2014. All newly elected county committee members will take office February 18, 2014. All county committee members whose term expires on Dec. 31, 2013, will have their term extended to January 31, 2014.

Farmers and ranchers who serve on the committee help with the decisions necessary to administer government farm programs in their counties. Members provide local input and make decisions on disaster and conservation programs, emergency programs, commodity price support loan programs and other important agricultural issues.

The election of agricultural producers to FSA county committees is important to ALL farmers and ranchers. Farmers and ranchers who serve on the committee help with the decisions necessary to administer government farm programs in their counties. Members provide local input and make decisions on disaster and conservation programs, emergency programs, commodity price support loan programs and other important agricultural issues.

To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm may also be eligible to vote.

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NEW 2014 ACREAGE REPORTING DEADLINES

Producers now have until January 15, 2014, to report crops that have a November 15, 2013 reporting deadline without paying a late-file fee. Crops under this waiver include wheat and native and improved grasses intended for grazing or haying. The Risk Management Agency (RMA) did not grant a waiver so producers need to consult their crop insurance agent for deadlines for insured crops.

- Native Range, Apiculture, Perennial Forage, PRF, Fall Wheat and all other Fall Seeded Small Grains - November 15, 2013
- Honey - January 2, 2014
- Established Stand Alfalfa Seed, Fall Alfalfa Seed - January 15, 2014
- Spring Alfalfa Seed, Spring Barley, Corn, Dry Beans, Forage Seeding, Millet, Spring Oats, Potatoes, Sugar Beets, Sunflowers, Spring Wheat, and all other crops - July 15, 2014

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.
- If a perennial forage crop is reported with the intended use of "cover only," "green manure," "left standing," or "seed," then the acreage must be reported by July 15th.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

Additionally, producers can purchase both NAP and RMA coverage for 2014 annual forage crops. NAP coverage will not be available for 2015 annual forage crops.

Late file fees will be assessed for 2013 crops reported after September 15, 2013, and 2014 crops reported after January 15, 2014.

2013 Hay Production Attention NAP Participants ...

Report your 2013 hay production NOW!

2013 NAP hay crops need to be filed with our office by **July 15, 2014**. We recommend producers submit 2013 production records as soon as harvest is complete. If you fail to report your production it could have an adverse impact on the overall crop yield history and

payments.

Actual Production records should include bale count, average weight of bales, irrigation practice (NI, IR), field numbers to calculate acreage, and type of hay. **All production records need to be signed and dated by producer.** On request, our office will gladly prepare maps to assist in documenting production at time of harvest.

Attention: Sheridan and Johnson County Ag Producers

Our office is anticipating payments for 2013 NAP will be underway in January or February of 2014. We are currently waiting for authority and the percent reduction for the sequestration. We realize the wait may pose a hardship for many of you, so to expedite the process we will start calculating acreage and getting files ready for the payment process.

Prior to issuing NAP payments producers who have not previously submitted information will need to provide our office with signed copies of the following:

- BLM grazing permit/lease and final bill or invoice
- Forest Service grazing permit/lease and final bill or invoice
- State land lease and State land subleases
- Private Leases

Producers are Encouraged to Keep Accurate Records

Our FSA office is encouraging producers who sustain losses due to natural disasters to accumulate records of their losses as they occur. Suggested documentation would include, but is not limited to:

- Receipts
- Date of loss
- Photos of dead livestock
- Bank or other loan documents
- Tax records
- Purchase records
- Veterinarian records
- Description of cause of loss
- Rendering truck receipts
- Inventory records

FSA ADVISES PRODUCERS TO ANTICIPATE PAYMENT REDUCTIONS DUE TO MANDATED SEQUESTER

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is reminding farmers and ranchers who participate in FSA programs to plan accordingly in FY2014 for automatic spending reductions known as sequestration. The Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA) mandates that federal agencies implement automatic, annual reductions to discretionary and mandatory spending limits. For mandatory programs, the sequestration rate for FY2014 is 7.2%. Accordingly, FSA is implementing sequestration for the following programs:

- Dairy Indemnity Payment Program;
- Marketing Assistance Loans;
- Loan Deficiency Payments;
- Sugar Loans;
- Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program;
- Tobacco Transition Payment Program;
- 2013 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payments;
- 2013 Average Crop Revenue Election Program;
- 2011 and 2012 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program;
- Storage, handling; and Economic Adjustment Assistance for upland cotton

Conservation Reserve Program payments are specifically exempt by statute from sequestration, thus these payments will not be reduced.

These sequester percentages reflect current law estimates; however with the continuing budget uncertainty, Congress still may adjust the exact percentage reduction. Today's announcement intends to help producers plan for the impact of sequestration cuts in FY2014.

2013 Crop Commodity Loan Disbursements

The Farm Service Agency has resumed processing and the disbursement of 2013 crop commodity loans. Crop year 2013 commodity loan-making was suspended Oct. 1, 2013, to make changes necessary to accommodate the automatic funding reductions known as sequester.

Producers requesting 2013 crop commodity loans on their harvested commodities now will have a 5.1 percent reduction to the loan amount upon its disbursement, due to the sequestration. Commodity loans issued by marketing associations and loan servicing agents are also subject to the sequestration reduction.

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Important Dates to Remember

- **December 20, 2013** – Corrected COC Ballots mailed to Producers
- **December 25, 2013** – Christmas Holiday – Office Closed
- **January 1, 2014**– New Year's Day Holiday – Office Closed
- **January 2, 2014** – Crop Report Deadline for Honey
- **January 15, 2014** –Last day to report crops that have November 15, 2013 reporting deadline.
- **January 17, 2014** – Last day to return Corrected COC Ballots
- **February 18, 2014** – Newly elected COC members take office

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).