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FSA Encourages Farmers and Ranchers to Vote in County Committee Elections

The 2023 Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections will begin on Nov. 6, 2023, when ballots are mailed to eligible voters. The deadline to return ballots to local FSA offices, or to be postmarked, is Dec. 4, 2023.

County committee members are an important component of the operations of FSA and provide a link between the agricultural community and USDA. Farmers and ranchers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity price support programs; conservation programs; incentive, indemnity and disaster programs for some commodities; emergency programs and eligibility. FSA committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.



To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must:

- Be of legal voting age or, if not of legal voting age, supervise and conduct the farming operation of an entire farm.
- Have an interest in a farm or ranch as either:
 - An individual who meets one or more of the following:
 - Is eligible and capable to vote in one's own right.
 - Is a partner of a general partnership.
 - Is a member of a joint venture.
- Participates or cooperates in any FSA program that is provided by law. A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information to FSA about their farming or ranching operation(s) but may not have applied or received program benefits.

Eligible voters in Local Administrative Area 2, who do not receive a ballot can obtain one from their local FSA county office. Customers can identify which LAA they or their farming operation is in by using our new GIS locator tool available at fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Newly elected committee members will take office Jan. 1, 2024.

The candidates in this year's election are:

Nick Geis is nominated in LAA 2, Washakie County, to serve as a committee member for a 3-year term. Geis resides in Worland and has produced beets, barley, hay, corn, runs a feedlot and beef cows for 41 years.

He is an active member of Wyoming Sugar Company and serves as a shareholder.

More information on county committees can be found at fsa.usda.gov/elections or by contacting the Washakie-Hot Springs County FSA office.

USDA Reminds Producers of Fall Application Deadlines for Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

USDA Washakie-Hot Springs County Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers of approaching application deadlines for purchasing risk coverage for some crops through the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). NAP provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops impacted by natural disasters that result in lower yields, crop losses, or prevented crop planting.



NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available, including forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass and more.

Upcoming application deadlines for NAP coverage in Washakie or Hot Springs County for the 2024 production season include:

- Native grazing: 12/1/2023
- Grass for forage: 12/1/2023

NAP basic coverage is available at 55% of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50% of expected production. Buy-up coverage is available in some cases. NAP offers higher levels of coverage, ranging from 50% to 65% of expected production in 5% increments, at 100% of the average market price. Producers of organic crops and crops marketed directly to consumers also may exercise the “buy-up” option to obtain NAP coverage of 100% of the average market price at coverage levels ranging between 50% and 65% of expected production. Buy-up coverage is not available for crops intended for grazing.

For all coverage levels, the NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties. Premiums apply for buy-up coverage.

If a producer has a Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification (form CCC-860) on file with FSA, it may serve as an application for basic coverage for all eligible crops beginning with crop year 2022. These producers will have all NAP-related service fees for basic coverage waived. These producers may also receive a 50% premium reduction if higher levels of coverage are elected on form CCC-471, prior to the application closing date for each crop.

To learn more about NAP visit fsa.usda.gov/nap or contact your local USDA Service Center at 307-347-2456 ext. 2.

Reminders for FSA Direct and Guaranteed Borrowers with Real Estate Security

Farm loan borrowers who have pledged real estate as security for their Farm Service Agency (FSA) direct or guaranteed loans are responsible for maintaining loan collateral. Borrowers must obtain prior consent or approval from FSA or the guaranteed lender for any transaction that affects real estate security. These transactions include, but are not limited to:



- Leases of any kind
- Easements of any kind
- Subordinations

- Partial releases
- Sales

Failure to meet or follow the requirements in the loan agreement, promissory note, and other security instruments could lead to nonmonetary default which could jeopardize your current and future loans.

It is critical that borrowers keep an open line of communication with their FSA loan staff or guaranteed lender when it comes to changes in their operation. For more information on borrower responsibilities, read [Your FSA Farm Loan Compass](#).

Producers Encouraged to Apply Now for USDA Conservation Programs

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is encouraging agricultural producers and forest landowners to participate in voluntary conservation programs and adopt climate-smart practices in fiscal year 2024 as part of President Biden's Investing in America agenda. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is accepting applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), which help a wide variety of producers, including urban and organic producers.



For fiscal year 2024, NRCS has \$3 billion in Inflation Reduction Act funds to invest in [climate-smart mitigation activities](#). This year, NRCS expanded the list of those activities as well as expanded priority areas for ACEP for grasslands, wetlands and farmlands at risk of conversion. Learn more about those expansions in our [Sept. 28, 2023 news release](#).

Additionally, for fiscal year 2024, NRCS has over \$2 billion in Farm Bill funding available to producers for priorities like organic and urban agriculture, soil health, water quality and quantity and wildlife habitat development. This extensive amount of funding will be used to meet producer demand for our oversubscribed programs, maximize climate benefits and help producers address their natural resource challenges.

NRCS accepts producer applications for its conservation programs year-round. To apply for fiscal year 2024 funding, apply by your [state's ranking date](#) by contacting your [local NRCS office](#).



Worland USDA Service Center

208 Shiloh RD
Worland, WY 82401

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Multi County Rangeland Management Specialist

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Rangeland Management Specialist

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County Committee:

Julie Haun, Chairperson
Jim Butterfield, Vice Chairperson
Billie Jo Norsworthy, Member
Cameron Roady, Member
Marilyn Vass, Member