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County Office Message

Greetings Sweetwater & Sublette County Farmers and Ranchers.

First, we would like to congratulate Nicholas Goodman on being elected to represent LAA #1 for the County committee- we appreciate his willingness to serve the producers of Sweetwater/ Sublette counties.

A couple of quick reminders and important dates:

- With Winter approaching, please remember to take pictures of any dead animals and keep good records. The LIP program is one that requires extensive records and proof of death. If you have any questions about what kinds of documentation you might need, please give us a call or stop by the office.
- Both Sweetwater and Sublette County have been fortunate this year with moisture. The Livestock Forage Program is a resource for grazing losses sustained in drought conditions during the county's normal grazing season. This year is the first year since 2019 that Sweetwater County ground is not eligible for this program. **Sublette** county triggered for one month, due to registering in a D2 level drought on the Drought Monitor. Producers in Sublette County who suffered grazing losses due to those early drought conditions can apply for the LFP program for ground physically located in Sublette County.

IMPORTANT DATES:

January 30, 2024- 2023 ELAP/ LFP deadline for application for payment

January 31, 2024- 2023 deadline for LDP's for 2023 Wool, Mohair, and unshorn Pelts

February 29, 2024- Deadline to request all LIP assistance for 2023 calendar year

OFFICE CLOSERS:

January 15, 2024- Observance of Martin Luther King, Jr Day

February 19, 2024- Observance of Presidents Day

As you are looking towards more time catching up on paperwork, please consider these reminders:

- Leases and/or land ownership changes including operational changes must be reported within 30 calendar days of the change to avoid late fees, repayment of funds issued and/or ineligibility or program participation. The deadline to submit changes for 2024 program year is August 1, 2024.
- If your banking information has changed since the last time you received a payment from our office, please contact us to update your direct deposit information. Account changes are not automatically reported to us (our system is different than NRCS or Farm Loan) and having the wrong account on file can hold up payments from getting to producers for additional weeks.

*****Also, producers that have notices of loss for LIP (Livestock Indemnity Program) and ELAP (Emergency Livestock Assistance Program) WE NEED YOUR SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION, so we can get these applications worked up.**

- Sweetwater/ Sublette County FSA Staff

Save Money on Fuel with No-Till Farming



How much fuel can farmers save each year by transitioning from conventional tillage to continuous no-till? According to a [report from USDA's Conservation Effects Assessment Project \(CEAP\)](#), 3.6 gallons per acre is a reasonable estimate. With current off-road diesel fuel prices, this could translate into approximately \$17 per acre saved annually.

Nearly 87 percent of all cropland acres nationwide are farmed using some form of conservation tillage, where tillage is reduced for at least one crop within a given field. Continuous no-till accounts for 33 percent of this total.

[Improving soil health](#) is one known benefit of limiting disturbance. Farmers who minimize tillage across their operation may reduce soil erosion, maximize water infiltration, improve nutrient cycling, build organic matter, and strengthen resilience to disaster events or challenging growing conditions. Based on the latest data, they may also use significantly less fuel than with conventional tillage and reduce their associated carbon dioxide emissions.

According to CEAP, farmers who implement conservation tillage practices instead of continuous conventional tillage:

- Reduce potential nationwide fuel use by 763 million gallons of diesel equivalents each year, roughly the amount of energy used by 2.8 million households.
- Reduce potential associated emissions by 8.5 million tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalents each year, equivalent to removing nearly 1.7 million gasoline-powered passenger vehicles from the road.

How is this possible? Annually, farmers who practice continuous no-till use approximately 3.6 fewer gallons of fuel per acre than if they practiced continuous conventional tillage. Farmers who practice seasonal no-till – farming without tilling for at least one crop – use approximately 3 fewer gallons of fuel per acre than they would with conventional tillage year-round.

Acre by acre, fuel saved is money saved. Let's assume an average off-road diesel fuel price of \$4.75 per gallon*. By transitioning from continuous conventional tillage to continuous no-till, a farmer can save just over \$17 per acre each year in fuel costs. A farmer who transitions from continuous conventional tillage to seasonal no-till can save more than \$14 per acre on fuel annually. These potential savings are significantly larger than with [CEAP's first fuel savings report](#), primarily due to the current price of diesel fuel.

The bottom line for farmers: Reducing tillage leads to fuel savings that deliver significant financial benefits while building healthier soils for a more resilient operation.

USDA Can Help

If you're a farmer interested in reducing tillage or pursuing other conservation efforts across your operation, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can help.

- [This blog](#) offers five simple tips for farmers interested in trying no-till for the first time.
- [This 90-second video](#) provides a description of no-till and associated benefits according to a Delaware farmer.
- [This 23-minute video](#) follows five South Carolina farmers seeking to quantify the benefits of conservation practices that support soil health.
- [This webpage](#) details principles to improve soil health, including reduced tillage and complimentary conservation practices such as cover crops, crop rotations, and rotational grazing.

NRCS has local USDA Service Centers in nearly every county across the United States. You may [find contact information for your nearest Service Center here](#). NRCS staff are available to provide free, one-on-one assistance with a suite of practices to strengthen your operation, conserve natural resources, and boost your bottom line. [SMART nutrient management](#), for example, is important to consider with no-till and may help you [save money on fertilizer while improving water quality](#) – another win-win.

Visit the [new NRCS website](#) to learn more about conservation basics, getting assistance from NRCS, programs and initiatives, and resources to inform management decisions. Visit the [new CEAP webpage](#) for additional information about USDA's efforts to quantify the effects of conservation practices across croplands and other working lands.

USDA Launches Loan Assistance Tool to Enhance Equity and Customer Service



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) launched a new online tool to help farmers and ranchers better navigate the farm loan application process. This uniform application process will help to ensure all farm loan applicants receive equal support and have a consistent customer experience with USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) regardless of their individual circumstances.

USDA experiences a high rate of incomplete or withdrawn applications, particularly among underserved customers, due in part to a challenging and lengthy paper-based application process. The Loan Assistance Tool is available 24/7 and gives customers an online step-by-step guide that supplements the

support they receive when working in person with a USDA employee, providing materials that may help an applicant prepare their loan application in one tool.

Farmers can access the Loan Assistance Tool by visiting farmers.gov/farm-loan-assistance-tool and clicking the 'Get Started' button. From here they can follow the prompts to complete the Eligibility Self-Assessment and start the farm loan journey. The tool is built to run on any modern browser like Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or the Safari browser, and is fully functional on mobile devices. It does not work in Internet Explorer.

The Loan Assistance Tool is the first of multiple farm loan process improvements that will be available to USDA customers on farmers.gov in the future. Other improvements and tools that are anticipated to launch in 2023 include:

- A streamlined and simplified direct loan application, reduced from 29 pages to 13 pages.

- An interactive online direct loan application that gives customers a paperless and electronic signature option, along with the ability to attach supporting documents such as tax returns.
- An online direct loan repayment feature that relieves borrowers from the necessity of calling, mailing, or visiting a local Service Center to pay a loan installment.

USDA Makes Producer-Friendly Change to 2023 Notice of Loss Requirements for Two Livestock Disaster Assistance Programs



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has waived certain notice of loss requirements for 2023 for the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-raised Fish](#) (ELAP) and [Livestock Indemnity Program](#) (LIP). In an effort to streamline assistance to support access to critical 2023 natural disaster recovery assistance, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is waiving the requirement to submit ELAP or LIP notices of loss within a pre-determined number of days for 2023. Instead, producers have the flexibility to submit 2023 notices of loss as soon as possible, once losses are realized, following a natural disaster event or no later than the established annual program application for payment deadlines for each program. FSA county committees are also being asked to re-evaluate 2023 ELAP and LIP late-filed notices of loss to determine if the waiver applies.

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-raised Fish

ELAP provides recovery assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybee, and farm-raised fish losses due to an eligible adverse weather or loss condition, including blizzards, disease, water shortages and wildfires. ELAP covers grazing and feed losses, transportation of water and feed to livestock and hauling livestock to grazing acres. ELAP also covers certain mortality losses for livestock including honeybees and farm-raised fish as well as honeybee hive losses. ELAP is designed to address losses not covered by other FSA disaster assistance programs.

For 2023, FSA is waiving the regulatory requirement for producers who are eligible for ELAP to file a notice of loss with FSA within 30 calendar days from when the loss first became apparent for livestock and farm-raised fish and 15 calendar days for honeybees. Under this waiver, notices of loss are to be completed by the eligible producer and submitted to FSA no later than the annual program application deadline of January 30 following the program year in which the loss occurred. Therefore, producers who incurred ELAP-eligible losses in 2023, will need to submit a notice of loss by Jan. 30, 2024.

Livestock Indemnity Program

LIP provides disaster recovery assistance to livestock owners and contract growers who experience livestock deaths, in excess of normal mortality caused by eligible loss conditions including adverse weather, disease and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law, including wolves and avian predators. LIP also helps livestock owners who must sell livestock at a reduced price because of an injury from certain loss conditions.

For 2023, FSA is waiving the regulatory requirement for producers who are eligible for LIP to file a notice of loss within 30 calendar days from when the loss first became apparent. Under this waiver, producers are still required to complete and submit the notice of loss to FSA no later than the annual program payment application date, which is 60 calendar days following the program year in which the loss occurred. The LIP payment application and notice of loss deadline is Feb. 29, 2024, for the 2023 program year.

2023 Disapproved Applications

FSA county committees will review all notices of loss for both ELAP and LIP that were previously disapproved for the 2023 program year due to late filing and re-evaluate them to determine if the waiver applies. To receive ELAP and LIP benefits, producers will still need to file an application for payment by the established program

deadline for the 2023 program year. Producers who are unsure about the status of their notice of loss or application for payment, should contact their local FSA county office as soon as possible.

Supporting Documentation

Accurate records and loss documentation are critical following disaster events and are required when filing notices of loss with FSA. Acceptable loss documentation includes:

- Documentation of the number, kind, type, and weight range of livestock that have died, supplemented, if possible, by photographs or video records of ownership and losses.
- Rendering truck receipts by kind, type, and weight - important to document prior to disposal.
- Beginning inventory supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts.
- Documentation from Animal Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Natural Resources, or other sources to substantiate eligible death losses due to an eligible loss condition.
- Documentation that livestock were removed from grazing pastures due to an eligible adverse weather or loss condition.
- Costs of transporting livestock feed to eligible livestock, such as receipts for equipment rental fees for hay lifts and snow removal.
- Feed purchase receipts if feed supplies or grazing pastures are destroyed.
- Number of gallons of water transported to livestock due to water shortages.

More Information

The improvements to ELAP and LIP build on others made since 2021. This includes ELAP benefits for above normal costs for hauling feed and water to livestock and transporting livestock to other grazing acres during a qualifying drought. FSA also [expanded eligible livestock](#) under ELAP, LIP, and the Livestock Forage Disaster Assistance Program, and increased the LIP payment rate for beef, beefalo, bison, and dairy animals and most recently beef calves over 800 pounds. Learn about USDA disaster assistance programs on [farmers.gov](#).

On [farmers.gov](#), the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#) and [Loan Assistance Tool](#) can help producers and landowners determine [disaster protection and recovery](#) program or loan options. For more information about FSA programs, contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

Farmers Can Now Enroll for Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Programs the 2024 Crop Year



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced that agricultural producers can now enroll in the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) [Agriculture Risk Coverage \(ARC\) and Price Loss Coverage \(PLC\)](#) programs for the 2024 crop year. Producers can enroll and make election changes for the 2024 crop year starting Dec. 18, 2023. The deadline to complete enrollment and any election change is March 15, 2024.

On Nov. 16, 2023, President Biden signed into law H.R. 6363, the *Further Continuing Appropriations and Other Extensions Act, 2024* (Pub. L. 118-22), which extended the *Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018* (Pub. L. 115-334), more commonly known as the 2018 Farm Bill, through September 30, 2024. This extension allows authorized programs, including ARC and PLC, to continue operating.

2024 Elections and Enrollment

Producers can elect coverage and enroll in ARC-County (ARC-CO) or PLC, which provide crop-by-crop protection, or ARC-Individual (ARC-IC), which protects the entire farm. Although election changes for 2024 are optional, producers must enroll through a signed contract each year. Also, if a producer has a multi-year contract on the farm it will continue for 2024 unless an election change is made.

If producers do not submit their election revision by the March 15, 2024, deadline, their election remains the same as their 2023 election for commodities on the farm. Farm owners cannot enroll in either program unless they have a share interest in the cropland.

Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

2022 Crop Year Payments

This fall, FSA issued payments totaling more than \$267 million to agricultural producers who enrolled in the 2022 ARC-CO option and the ARC ARC-IC option for covered commodities that triggered a payment. Payments through the PLC option did not trigger for the 2022 crop year.

ARC and PLC payments for a given crop year are paid out the following fall to allow actual county yields and the Market Year Average prices to be finalized. These payments help mitigate fluctuations in either revenue or prices for certain crops. Payments for crops that may trigger for the 2023 crop year will be issued in the fall of 2024.

Crop Insurance Considerations

ARC and PLC are part of a broader USDA safety net that also includes crop insurance and marketing assistance loans.

Producers are reminded that ARC and PLC elections and enrollments can impact eligibility for some crop insurance products.

Producers on farms with a PLC election can purchase Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) through their Approved Insurance Provider; however, producers on farms where ARC is the election are ineligible for SCO on their planted acres for that crop on that farm.

Unlike SCO, the Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO) is unaffected by an ARC election. Producers may add ECO regardless of the farm program election.

Upland cotton farmers who choose to enroll seed cotton base acres in ARC or PLC are ineligible for the stacked income protection plan (STAX) on their planted cotton acres for that farm.

Web-Based Decision Tools

Many universities offer web-based decision tools to help producers make informed, educated decisions using crop data specific to their respective farming operations. Producers are encouraged to use the tool of their choice to support their ARC and PLC elections.

More Information

For more information on ARC and PLC, producers can visit the [ARC and PLC webpage](#) or contact their local [USDA Service Center](#). Producers can also make elections and complete enrollment [online with level 2 eAuth](#).

Making Farm Reconstitutions

When changes in farm ownership or operation take place, a farm *reconstitution* is necessary. The reconstitution — or recon — is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation.

To be effective for the current fiscal year, farm combinations and farm divisions must be requested by **August 1 of the fiscal year** for farms subject to the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program. A reconstitution is considered to be requested when all of the required signatures are on FSA-155 and all other applicable documentation, such as proof of ownership, is submitted.

Total Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and non-ARC/PLC farms may be reconstituted at any time.

The following are the different methods used when doing a farm recon:

- **Estate Method** — the division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate
- **Designation of Landowner Method** — may be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons. In order to use this method, the land sold must have been owned for at least three years, or a waiver granted, and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding
- **DCP Cropland Method** — the division of bases in the same proportion that the DCP cropland for each resulting tract relates to the DCP cropland on the parent tract
- **Default Method** — the division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system.

For questions on your farm reconstitution, contact your Sweetwater/ Sublette County USDA Service Center at 307-362-3062 ext. 2



Sweetwater/ Sublette County
USDA Service Center

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COC Meeting: January 17, 2024