



# NEWSLETTER



## February 2016

**Platte County FSA Office**  
1502 Progress Court  
Wheatland, WY 82201

Phone: (307) 322-4050  
FAX: (855) 415-3444

Office Hours  
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

County Committee  
John Watson  
Ruthie Cundall  
Amy Miller

County Executive Director  
Pam Metz Ext. 100  
[pamela.metz@wy.usda.gov](mailto:pamela.metz@wy.usda.gov)

Farm Loan Officer  
Dixie Mount Ext. 104  
[dixie.mount@wy.usda.gov](mailto:dixie.mount@wy.usda.gov)

Office Staff  
Mitzi Mudgett-PT Ext. 102  
Kayla Mantle-PT Ext. 112  
Echo Koger-FLOT Ext. 103

District Director  
Sherri Harvey Ext. 109  
[sherri.harvey@wy.usda.gov](mailto:sherri.harvey@wy.usda.gov)

Next COC meeting:  
March 17, 2016

FSA Home Page  
[www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)

USDA Home Page  
[www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)

## Thank You, Dave Hinman

Dave Hinman recently concluded 9 years of service on the Platte County FSA Committee. Those of us who have had the privilege of working with Dave in any capacity appreciate his wealth of knowledge in the agricultural community. Thanks to Dave for his service.

## CRP General Signup

Farmers and ranchers are reminded that the next general enrollment period for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) started Dec. 1, 2015, and ends on Feb. 26, 2016. December 2015 also marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CRP, a federally funded program that assists agricultural producers with the cost of restoring, enhancing and protecting certain grasses, shrubs and trees to improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and reduce loss of wildlife habitat.

As of September 2015, 24.2 million acres were enrolled in CRP. CRP also is protecting more than 170,000 stream miles with riparian forest and grass buffers, enough to go around the world 7 times. For an interactive tour of CRP success stories from across the U.S., visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/CRPis30](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/CRPis30), or follow on Twitter at #CRPis30.

Participants in CRP establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as “covers”) to control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat on marginally productive agricultural lands. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. At times when commodity prices are low, enrolling sensitive lands in CRP can be especially attractive to farmers and ranchers, as it softens the economic hardship for landowners at the same time that it provides ecological benefits. Contract duration is between 10 and 15 years. The long-term goal of the program is to re-establish native plant species on marginal agricultural lands for the primary purpose of preventing soil erosion and improving water quality and related benefits of reducing loss of wildlife habitat.

Contracts on 1.64 million acres of CRP are set to expire on Sept. 30, 2016. Producers with expiring contracts or producers with environmentally sensitive land are encouraged to evaluate their options under CRP.

Since it was established on Dec. 23, 1985, CRP has:

- Prevented more than 9 billion tons of soil from eroding, enough soil to fill 600 million dump trucks;
- Reduced nitrogen and phosphorous runoff relative to annually tilled cropland by 95 and 85 percent respectively;
- Sequestered an annual average of 49 million tons of greenhouse gases, equal to taking 9 million cars off the road.

Since 1996, CRP has created nearly 2.7 million acres of restored wetlands.

For more information FSA conservation programs, visit a local FSA office or [www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation). To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

Continuous	Continuous Conservation Reserve Program
Continuous	Farm Storage Facility Loans
Ongoing	Signup for Livestock Indemnity Payments (LIP)
Feb. 26, 2016	Enrollment deadline for General CRP Offers
April 1, 2016	NAP sales closing deadline
July 15, 2016	Deadline to report 2016 spring planted crops
Aug. 1, 2016	Deadline to enroll in 2016 ARC/PLC

## ***2015 County Committee Election***

This year's election in Platte County was in LAA 2, which covers T25, R67W-R70N / T24, R67W-R70W / T23, R68W-R70W / T22N, R69W-R70W, and T21, R70W.

Amy Miller was elected as the new COC member for LAA 2, with Tyler Lauck being elected as the Alternate.

We want to congratulate Amy and welcome her to her first 3 year term on the Platte County Committee.

## ***Marketing Assistance Loans (MAL) Available***

MALs provide financing and marketing assistance for wheat, feed grains, soybeans, and other oilseeds, pulse crops, wool and honey. MALs provide producers interim financing after harvest to help them meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are typically at harvest-time lows.

2015 loan rates for applicable crops in Platte County are:

Wheat HRW	\$2.87/bu.	Wheat HRS	\$2.82/bu.	Corn	\$2.04/bu.
Barley	\$1.85/bu.	Oats	\$1.37/bu.	Sunflowers	\$10.48/cwt.

Interest rates are minimal (example: the February 2016 rate is 1.625%) and the term of the loan will be end of the 9<sup>th</sup> month following disbursement. 2015 loans on small grains can be requested through March 31, 2016. 2015 corn/sunflower loans can be requested through May 31, 2016. The grower must maintain title and control of the commodity (beneficial interest) while the grain is under loan.

## ***Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)***

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides assistance to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law. LIP compensates livestock owners and contract growers for livestock death losses due to adverse weather, including but not limited to losses due to floods, blizzards, lightning and wildfires.

**For 2016**, eligible losses must occur on or after January 1, 2016, and before December 31, 2016. A notice of loss must be filed with FSA within 30 days of when the loss of livestock is apparent. Participants must provide the following supporting documentation to their local FSA office no later than 30 calendar days after the end of the calendar year for which benefits are requested:

- Proof of death documentation
- Copy of growers contracts
- Proof of normal mortality documentation
- File a Notice of Loss
- Sign an Application for Payment

Additional information regarding LIP or other FSA programs can be found by visiting a nearby FSA Service Center or online at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

## ***Non-Insurable Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)***

The sales closing date to purchase coverage on NAP eligible crops has changed. All perennial hay crops, pasture grass, winter wheat, and all spring seeded crops now have a sales closing date of **April 1<sup>st</sup>**.

NAP offers a "buy-up" coverage on all eligible crops harvested for forage (hay). Through the "buy-up" option, coverage can be purchased for levels of 50, 55, 60 and 65% of the yield, at 100% of the crop price. Premiums are minimal and are paid in addition to the \$250 per crop service fee for the NAP policy.

Call the office to see how "buy-up" coverage can work for you. If you currently have a 2016 NAP basic coverage policy you simply come in, select which level of buy-up coverage you want and sign the policy. If you do not currently have a 2016 NAP basic policy you can still purchase buy up coverage by paying the \$250 service fee per crop and then select the level of buy up coverage and sign all necessary forms.

FSA has a great tool to calculate premiums and loss payments at [www.fsa.usapas.com/NAP](http://www.fsa.usapas.com/NAP). **Remember, the deadline to purchase NAP coverage is April 1, 2016.**

## ***Crop Reporting***

The annual timely and accurate reporting of acres for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of benefits for a variety of Farm Service Agency programs, including ARC/PLC.

Conservation Reserve Program acreage must be reported to receive annual rental payments. Crop acreage for Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) must also be reported.

Crop reports, form FSA-578, Report of Acreage, must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. In Wyoming, producers had until November 15, 2015 to timely file their 2016 acreage reports for fall seeded crops. Reports can still be filed, but may be subject to a late-filing fee.

2016 acreage reports for spring seeded crops and CRP must be reported by July 15, 2016 in order to be considered timely filed.

## ***Farm Storage Facility Loan Program***

The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFL) program allows producers of eligible commodities to obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities. Participants are required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility, permanent drying, and handling equipment. Loan terms of 7, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan.

Eligible commodities include grains, oilseeds, peanuts, pulse crops, hay, honey, renewable biomass commodities, fruits and vegetables. Qualified facilities include grain bins, grain handling and drying equipment, hay storage sheds, cold storage facilities and handling equipment for fruits and vegetables. Specialty crop fruit and vegetable growers can also use the FSFL loan program for sorting bins, wash stations and other food safety-related equipment. To learn more about the FSA Farm Storage Facility Loan, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport).

## ***Enrollment Period for 2016 USDA Safety Net Coverage Began Dec. 7***

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) has announced that producers who chose coverage from the safety net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill, known as the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, can begin visiting FSA county offices starting Dec. 7, 2015, to sign contracts to enroll in coverage for 2016. The enrollment period will continue until Aug. 1, 2016.

Although the choice between ARC and PLC is completed and remains in effect through 2018, producers must still enroll their farm by signing a contract each year to receive coverage.

Producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office to schedule an appointment to enroll. If a farm is not enrolled during the 2016 enrollment period, producers on that farm will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program.

The two programs were authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and offer a safety net to agricultural producers when there is a substantial drop in prices or revenues for covered commodities. 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 (which includes short grain and sweet rice), safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat. Upland cotton is no longer a covered commodity. For more details regarding these programs, go to [www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc).

For more information, producers are encouraged to visit their local FSA office. To find a local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

## ***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.

**Contact your local FSA office or visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)  
for more about FSA programs and loans.**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FARM SERVICE AGENCY  
PLATTE COUNTY FSA COMMITTEE  
1502 Progress Court  
Wheatland, WY 82201

### ***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.

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 will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish 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 (202) 690-7442 or e-mail at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities and wish to file either an EEO or program complaint, please contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish). Persons with disabilities, who wish to file a program complaint, please see information above on how to contact us by mail directly or by email. If you require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) please contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).