

2014 Farm Bill reauthorizes disaster aid programs

Disaster assistance options are available through the Agricultural Act of 2014 to help protect producers of livestock, forage, trees, honeybees, and trees against adverse weather and other natural disasters.

Producers should be aware of several important changes. Livestock and forage producers are no longer required to carry crop insurance or NAP coverage (Non-insured Crop Disaster Program) to be eligible for disaster payments.

Producers are required to comply with conservation requirements on any eligible lands; this includes a conservation plan, complying with highly erodible and wetland requirements, and having an AD-1026 form on file (demonstrates compliance with these provisions).

Program participation requires producers keep complete and accurate records. Records should include veterinary death-loss verification, pictures, weather records, grazing records/re-

ceipts, feed purchased, livestock headcounts, and contracts/leases, among other documents.

Livestock Indemnity Program

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) pays producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality due to extreme weather events or predator attacks. The program pays for 75 percent of the approved market value the day before the animal is lost. Notice of loss must be given within 30 days of the occurrence.

Producers must prove ownership and provide documentation (veterinary or otherwise) as to the loss of the animal(s).

Livestock Forage Loss Program

The Livestock Forage Program (LFP) provides payments due to loss of grazing on native or improved pastures. A producer must be in a D2 or higher designated drought county via the U.S. Drought Monitor or have a fire/natural disaster designation.

Payments for grazing losses due to drought or fire are based on rates determined by the Farm Service Agency and can cover losses for up to 180 grazing days. Payments vary based on severity of the drought and are adjusted accordingly.

Covered livestock are livestock that were owned, leased,

Disaster Program Eligibility Checklist



- ✓ AD-1026 Form signed and conservation compliance
- ✓ Proof of ownership of livestock
- ✓ All necessary records: loss documentation, leases, agreements, weather records, head counts, etc.
- ✓ Meet with local Farm Service Agency office personnel



For more information

Visit RightRisk.org/WY for numerous farm bill presentations and resources and other tools to guide users through available disaster programs.

Disaster aid programs are also available for tree and forest producers. Visit the Farm Service Agency's website at www.fsa.usda.gov for more information on all of the new farm bill programs, including the disaster assistance programs. Online tools to help producers and developed by academic professionals are linked at FSA's website.

purchased, or entered into a contract to purchase during the 60 calendar days before the beginning date of a qualifying drought or fire. Eligible livestock must be part of a commercial operation and not for recreational uses such as roping and may include animals sold or otherwise disposed of because of qualifying drought conditions during the current year, or in some cases, prior years. They also cannot normally be in a feedlot situation when a drought event occurs.

The Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm raised fish (ELAP) pays producers for losses due to natural disasters not associated with drought or fire that

are not covered by either LFP or LIP. Livestock losses, feed shortages, and losses associated with hauling water are covered. Livestock losses must be due to an approved event and cover up to 75 percent of the approved market value.

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Spring showers better time for goal setting than during winter snows of New Years

January 1 may be the traditional time to develop New Year's resolutions and goals for the year, but I tend to think springtime is a better season to plan for the future.

The calf crop is on the ground for many operations, pastures are greening up, and breeding season is either here, or right around the corner. Spring is a time of optimism, growth, and forward planning – a perfect time to gaze into your crystal ball.

There are hundreds of goal-setting workshops, worksheets, outlines, guidelines, and recommendations. They boil down to at least three specific focus points.

Number 1. Get everyone involved in planning. Everyone with responsibilities or roles to play in the operation should get an opportunity to share their thoughts and vision. Goal setting is just another opportunity to improve communication between everyone involved. Communication is a good thing. As ranches are passed on to



the next generation, communication between all family members involved becomes MORE important as well as MORE difficult. Many family members involved in a ranch may not actually live and work on the operation. Involving everyone in planning and goal setting is key to having a common, shared set of goals.

Number 2. Make sure all types of goals and objectives are discussed and included in planning. They may include family goals, individual goals, ranch resource goals, production/profitability goals, and business goals. Developing family priorities and quality-of-life discussions may help clarify and condense everyone's expecta-

tions toward specific, attainable ranching and business goals.

Number 3. Goals should be specific, measurable goals realistically attainable. "Having a more successful calving season" may seem nice, but it's difficult to define success without identifying specific goals, such as setting a percent live calf crop, calving percentage,

and weaning percentage. While production and financial goals are easier to quantify, more important goals involve long-range planning, communication, quality of life, prioritization, and definitions of success. Establishing quarterly or semi-annual meetings may be a good way to encourage communication among all involved.

So, while flipping through the new A.I. catalogs, browsing the ranch supply brochures, and imagining all of the potential summer projects, consider writing your goals down and sharing them with family members. Successful operations tend to start with having a unified strategy and clear set of goals.

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