

May 15, 2015

FLOOD DISASTER ASSISTANCE

My heart goes out to people in Swanton and DeWitt and any others who had damage to their homes from flood water. I remember 1984, what it was like, and I remember 1993 at my parent's farm home south of Nemaha (with 5 feet of sewage water in their basement) and what a mess that was to recover from and all the property loss and the cleanup. For those with first floor flooding and basement damage and, furthermore, basement wall damage, it's a terrible thing to have happen. Beer and kolaches only help so much.

Keep your neighbors and people in mind. I have learned that about 15 homes in DeWitt will face an engineer review to determine if they are livable. A meeting is being held on Monday, May 18th, with representatives from Nebraska VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster) discussing long-term recovery in DeWitt and unmet needs of residents.

If you have a rural well and it was under water or near floodwater, you better check it for coliform bacteria. We have the water sample bottles at the Extension Office in Wilber. Never mail a water sample on a Thursday or Friday and use one-day mail service to the lab. Check out our flood resources at <http://flood.unl.edu>.

I have heard we may have some animal losses in the county including sheep and a few cattle and calves. If you have lost livestock due to the recent natural disaster, please report this within 30 days of the disaster event to the Saline County Farm Service Agency. To report livestock deaths, you can either stop by the office or simply notify the agency with a phone call at (402) 821-3292.

Our Saline County FSA director, Aaron Peithmann, will be meeting with the county committee to discuss our agricultural losses and other issues. Your input is vitally important. The local newsletter is important to receive and is available via email. You can sign up at the following website shortcut: <http://ow.ly/MY8V2>. It contains the latest program information as well as disaster program updates. If you don't have email, then I would say 100% of you should have someone in the family that does. Email Aaron Peithmann to sign up at: aaron.peithmann@ne.usda.gov.

The Agricultural Act of 2014 indefinitely extended some disaster programs that were previously authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill. The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) provides assistance to producers if their land was damaged by a natural disaster and needs conservation practices. FSA administered this program last in Saline County after the May 2004 tornado and storm event.

Dependent upon funding, ECP provides up to 75% cost-share assistance to agricultural producers who suffered severe damage to their farmland as a result of a natural disaster and the damage is of such magnitude that it would be too costly to rehabilitate without federal assistance. Some of the eligible practices include debris removal, grading, shaping, re-leveling or similar measures, restoring permanent fences, and restoring conservation structures. For producer's land to be eligible, the disaster must create new conservation problems that, if untreated, would impair or endanger the land and affect its productive capacity.



Please note: ECP application approvals are subject to the availability of funds by the national FSA office. More information will be made available as the Saline County Committee determines the needed practices and makes the subsequent requests.

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