



Beginning Rancher's First Steps with USDA Programming

** New Employee already making an impact in their region! **

IAC Great Plains Region

While winter storm Wesley was hitting the Midwest with large snow amounts and continued blizzard conditions, IAC proactively posted an informational write up about FSA disaster assistance focusing on Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) on social media. From this post IAC was contacted by Shorty Garrett, a rancher from central Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation regarding LIP. IAC learned that he was recently awarded a lease agreement on a range unit from Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. He had not been enrolled in any USDA programs thus far.



Photo Courtesy of Mr Garrett- his horse

IAC met him at his ranch where he explained how he still does things the “old cowboy way” riding horseback much of the time and doesn’t have extensive cattle facilities. He has deep wooded draws in his calving pasture that are excellent protection during winter weather. Wesley left more than 28 inches of snow with 50 mile an hour wind causing up to 20 ft high drifts in some areas right during the heart of his calving period. Most of the death losses were not apparent until after snow melted the following weeks. After this discussion IAC made sure his loss was reported to his county office, helped him fill out FSA forms for LIP, and gave him supplemental record keeping documentation. IAC went on to respond to his stated interest in NRCS conservation programming. IAC pulled up a map of his new tribal unit, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the land. Mr. Garrett expressed that pastures had excellent water sources throughout, and a good variety of grasses, trees, and shrubs.

He was given an NRCS conservation workbook that IAC went through with him. After explaining various programs available he showed great interest in the Conservation Stewardship Program. He pointed out that his parents and grandparents had not utilized any NRCS programs and didn’t have much knowledge of them.

“I only knew little about NRCS programs from what I’ve been told by the neighbors at the local feed store; after meeting with IAC’s technical assistant I knew CSP was something I wanted to implement in my operation right away” Shorty Garrett

An application was filled out focusing on CSP. IAC wrote a narrative to send with the application to help NRCS better understand the producer’s operation. This is an example of how beginning ranchers can change the existing thought held by many older ranchers that “none of USDA’s programs can help me, they are only for farmers”. Through IAC assistance and support, Mr. Garrett can start the right relationship with USDA. He will be able to implement conservation practices that will have long term positive effects. He'll also gain from the financial benefit USDA’s programs offer to give this beginning rancher a solid foundation that will help him have a successful and sustainable operation.