

News Release

Nebraska Farm Service Agency

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EMERGENCY HAYING, GRAZING EXPANDED

LINCOLN, Neb., July 19, 2006 — In response to the drought affecting the state, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Thursday announced an expansion of the Conservation Reserve Program acreage that is available for emergency haying and grazing, according to the head of the state Farm Service Agency.

“Producers in 31 counties designated as drought counties have been eligible to hay or graze their CRP acreage on an emergency basis since June 7,” said Brian Wolford, FSA state executive director. “Last Thursday’s announcement expanded the CRP acreage open to emergency haying and grazing to include all counties in the state.”

To be approved for emergency haying or grazing, a county must be listed as a level "D3 Drought – Extreme" or greater, or have suffered at least a 40 percent loss of normal moisture and forage for the preceding four-month qualifying period. Producers in the following counties can apply for the emergency program.

Arthur, Banner, Buffalo, Chase, Cheyenne, Custer, Dawes, Dawson, Deuel, Dundy, Franklin, Frontier, Furnas, Garden, Garfield, Gosper, southwest Harlan, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Kimball, Lincoln, Loup, northern Phelps, Perkins, Red Willow, Sherman, southeast McPherson, southern Logan, Valley and Wheeler.

Under the expansion of the acreage open to emergency relief, livestock producers in above listed counties may arrange with producers in non-listed counties to hay or graze their CRP acreage.

“CRP participants in non-listed counties can offer their acreage — free or for a fee — to livestock producers in listed counties, but they may not hay or graze those acres for their own use,” said Wolford.

The Conservation Reserve Program is voluntary and offers annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term resource-conserving cover on eligible land. This action allows approved CRP participants to cut hay or graze livestock on CRP acreage, thereby providing supplemental forage to producers whose pastures have been adversely affected by drought.

“Producers who elect to hay or graze their CRP acres, or allow others to do so because of the emergency, should understand that their annual rental payments will be reduced by 10 percent,” said Wolford.

Emergency haying and grazing is normally limited CRP acres enrolled in the following conservation practices: CP1, Introduced Grasses; CP2, Native Grasses; CP4B, Permanent Wildlife Habitat Corridors; CP4D, Permanent Wildlife Habitat; CP10, Vegetative Cover; CP18B, Vegetation to Reduce Salinity; and CP18C, Salt Tolerant Vegetative Cover.

Because of the severity of the drought, emergency haying and grazing is also being permitted on CP23, Wetland Restoration.

Producers in the affected counties are encouraged to contact their local Farm Service Agency office for details on how to apply for emergency haying and grazing.

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