
USDA Announces Changes to Emergency Haying and Grazing Provisions

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 7, 2020 — The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) today announced changes for emergency haying and grazing of acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). This includes changes outlined in the 2018 Farm Bill that streamlines the authorization process for farmers and ranchers.

"FSA authorizes emergency haying and grazing of Conservation Reserve Program acres under certain conditions to provide emergency relief to livestock producers in times of severe drought or similar natural disasters," said FSA Administrator Richard Fordyce. "These program changes will simplify the authorization process with an automatic trigger by severe drought designation, allowing livestock producers to quickly access much-needed forage."

Program Changes

Previously emergency haying and grazing requests originated with FSA at the county level and required state and national level approval. Now approval will be based on drought severity as determined by the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#).

To date, 500 counties nationwide have triggered eligibility for emergency haying and grazing on CRP acres. A [list by state](#) and [map](#) of eligible counties are updated weekly and available on FSA's website.

Producers located in a county that is designated as severe drought (D2) or greater on or after the last day of the primary nesting season are eligible for emergency haying and grazing on all eligible acres. Additionally, producers located in counties that were in a severe drought (D2) status any single week during the last eight weeks of the primary nesting season may also be eligible for emergency haying and grazing unless the FSA County Committee determines that forage conditions no longer warrant emergency haying and grazing.

Counties that trigger for [Livestock Forage Disaster Program](#) (LFP) payments based on the U.S. Drought Monitor may have only certain practices on less than 50% of eligible contract acres. Producers should contact their local FSA county office for eligible CRP practices.

Counties that don't meet the drought monitor qualifications but have a 40% loss of forage production may also be eligible for emergency haying and grazing outside of the primary nesting season.

CRP Emergency Haying and Grazing Provisions

Before haying or grazing eligible acres, producers must submit a request for CRP emergency haying or grazing to FSA and obtain a modified conservation plan from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Emergency grazing is authorized for up to 90 days and emergency haying is authorized for up to 60 days. Program participants must stop haying and grazing 30 days before the first freeze date in the fall based on the dates established for LFP.

Under the emergency grazing provisions, producers can use the CRP acreage for their own livestock or may grant another livestock producer use of the CRP acreage. The eligible CRP acreage is limited to acres located within the approved county.

For emergency haying, producers are limited to one cutting and are permitted to sell the hay. Participants must remove all hay from CRP acreage within 15 days after baling and remove all livestock from CRP acreage no later than 1 day after the end of the emergency grazing period. There will be no CRP annual rental payment reduction for emergency haying and grazing authorizations.

More Information

For more information on CRP emergency haying and grazing visit fsa.usda.gov/crp or contact your FSA county office. To locate your FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-locator. For more disaster recovery assistance programs, visit farmers.gov/recover.

All USDA Service Centers are open for business, including some that are open to visitors to conduct business in person by appointment only. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service or any other Service Center agency should call ahead and schedule an appointment. Service Centers that are open for appointments will pre-screen visitors based on health concerns or recent travel, and visitors must adhere to social distancing guidelines. Visitors may also be required to wear a face covering during their appointment. Field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. Our program delivery staff will be in the office, and they will be working with our producers in office, by phone and using online tools. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

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