



Farm Service Agency
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Emergency Haying, Grazing of Conservation Reserve Program Acres Available to Help Livestock Producers Weather Excessive Rain

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Contact:
maryanne.coffin@usda.gov
207-990-9140

Options Available in Maine Due to Excessive Rain Conditions

Bangor, ME – August 7, 2023– Agricultural producers impacted by excessive rain can now request haying and grazing on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres in many Maine counties while still receiving their full rental payment for the land.

“Excessive rain is heavily impacting livestock producers in Maine and across the country, and emergency haying or grazing of lands enrolled in CRP helps producers in need of alternative forage and grazing sources,” said SED Sherry Hamel, State Executive Director for the Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Maine. “While CRP makes annual rental payments for land in conservation, under certain circumstances, FSA can allow the haying and grazing of these lands to mitigate the impacts of natural disasters without a reduction in payments.”

Outside of the [primary nesting season](#), emergency haying and grazing of CRP acres may be authorized to provide relief to livestock producers in areas affected by excessive rain or similar natural disaster. The primary nesting season for Maine ended August 1, 2023.

Producers can use the CRP acreage under the emergency grazing provisions for their livestock or may grant another livestock producer use of the CRP acreage.

Producers interested in emergency haying or grazing of CRP acres must notify their FSA county office before starting any activities. This includes producers accessing CRP acres held by someone else. To maintain contract compliance, producers must have their conservation plan modified by USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Emergency CRP Haying and Grazing Option

CRP emergency haying and grazing is available in eligible counties as long as stand condition can support grazing and a modified conservation plan is in place. In eligible counties, hay may be cut once each program year (Oct. 1-Sept. 30). According to an approved conservation plan, haying must conclude prior to Aug. 31 to allow time for regrowth prior to winter conditions.

CRP emergency grazing is available in eligible counties as long as it does not exceed 90 days each program year (Oct. 1-Sept. 30) and must stop when the minimum grazing height is reached, as established within the modified CRP conservation plan or when the county is no longer eligible for emergency haying and grazing.

Non-Emergency CRP Haying and Grazing Option

For producers not in an eligible county, there are options available under non-emergency haying and grazing provisions outside of the primary nesting season, including:

- Haying of all CRP practices, except for CP12 Wildlife Food Plots and several tree practices not more than once every three years for a 25% payment reduction. For non-emergency haying requests, 25% of the requested acreage must be left unhayed.
- Grazing of CRP acres not more than every other year for a 25% payment reduction.

Additional disaster assistance information can be found on farmers.gov, including the [farmers.gov Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#), and [Loan Assistance Tool](#). For assistance with a crop insurance claim, producers and landowners should contact their [crop insurance agent](#). For FSA and NRCS programs, they should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#).

Farm Service Agency:

1400 Independence Ave.
SW Washington, DC 20250

Contact:

FPAC Press Desk

FPAC.BC.Press@usda.gov