

USDA Authorizes Emergency Haying & Grazing of Conservation Reserve Program Acres for Additional Illinois Counties

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SPRINGFIELD, Illinois, August 10, 2023 – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director Scott Halpin has announced that 4 additional counties are authorized for emergency haying and grazing of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres for fiscal year 2023. FSA's fiscal year runs from October 1 to September 30.

Clay, Fayette, Hamilton, and Richland counties are currently eligible for emergency haying and grazing. The emergency grazing period for the listed counties will end on September 30, 2023. The emergency haying authorization for these counties will end on September 30, 2023.

Counties become eligible for CRP emergency haying and grazing when they reach the D2 (severe drought) level on the U.S. Drought Monitor for at least one week and are outside of the primary nesting season (April 15th through August 1st.) Additionally, the 2018 farm bill authorized counties with a documented 40-percent loss of forage production to be eligible for emergency grazing and haying. Local FSA County Committees can review forage loss data and make a recommendation to the Illinois FSA State Committee to authorize emergency haying and grazing outside the primary nesting season.

Eligible producers who are interested in emergency haying and grazing CRP acres must request approval before haying and grazing eligible acreage and must obtain a modified conservation plan from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that includes haying and grazing provisions.

All practices for emergency haying and grazing are eligible except CP38 (SAFE) and Conservation Reserve Enhancement (CREP) acres. There will be no CRP annual rental payment reduction for 2023 emergency haying and grazing authorizations.

To take advantage of the emergency haying or grazing provisions, authorized producers can use the CRP acreage for their own livestock or may grant another livestock producer use of the CRP acreage.

Participants are limited to one hay cutting and are permitted to sell the hay.

In counties that are authorized for emergency haying and grazing, producers are reminded that the same CRP acreage cannot be both hayed and/or grazed at the same time.

The eligible CRP acreage is limited to acres located within the approved county.

For more information and to request approval for emergency haying and grazing use of CRP acres, contact your local county FSA office; Clay County FSA Office at (618) 665-3341 ext. 2; Fayette County FSA at (618) 283-2311 ext. 2; Hamilton County FSA Office at (618) 643-4326 ext. 2; and the Richland County FSA Office at (618) 392-7141ext 2.

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