

Emergency Haying and Grazing on CRP Land

Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Dale Rodman requested the authorization of emergency hazing and grazing on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) practice CP25 land in a letter to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack yesterday.

Kansas has more than 850,000 acres currently enrolled in CP25, with a majority of these acres within the drought region. Many Kansas livestock producers, from the most severely affected areas, have worked closely with FSA county directors and converted CP2 to CP25 to enhance environmental benefits and to be good stewards of the land. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) authorized this same land to be used for emergency haying and grazing in 2012 and extreme drought conditions have made the request necessary again this year.

In the letter, Secretary Rodman emphasized the dire need for USDA to authorize emergency haying and grazing on CP25 land saying the continued drought conditions have increased negative impacts on feedstock, which are exponential this year in drought affected counties.

A full text of the letter can be seen below.

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

On behalf of the more than 65,000 farmers and ranchers in Kansas, I would like to thank you for your ongoing efforts to provide relief in response to the historic drought that continues to persist. The Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) is thankful for the efforts of the Kansas FSA State Committee and State Director to authorize emergency haying and grazing of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands during this extended disaster period.

I write this letter to request special attention and immediate action to approve the Kansas FSA State Committee's request, June 6, 2013, to the National FSA Office to authorize CRP practice CP25, Rare and Declining Habitat, to be released for emergency grazing. In addition, KDA requests a recommendation to allow haying of CP25, with the same rules and provisions that you authorized in 2012. The FSA placed reasonable rules and restrictions to maintain the resource for last year's effort and the emergency release was tremendously beneficial to Kansas agriculture. Haying and grazing was necessary in 2012 due to the drought conditions. These continued conditions have increased negative impacts on feedstock, which are exponential this year in drought affected counties.

Kansas livestock producers are voicing the dire need to access these program acres. Many producers, from the most severely affected areas, have worked closely with FSA county directors and converted CP2 to CP25 to enhance the environmental benefits and to be good stewards of the land. Under the current authorization, that modification or action has the potential to be devastating to their operation without your help. Kansas has 850,000 acres currently enrolled in CP25, with a majority of those acres within the drought region. KDA respectfully requests your support and action on behalf of Kansas agriculture and as a collective voice for Kansas farmers and ranchers.

The following news release from last year is attached to detail what KDA is requesting your action to repeat in 2013.

CRP Emergency Haying of CP25 Approved For Kansas Counties

Manhattan, Kansas - August 2, 2012 --- Adrian J. Polansky, State Executive Director of the Kansas Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced today that emergency haying of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) practice CP25, Rare & Declining Habitat acreage has been approved for all Kansas Counties.

The drought has depleted hay supplies and affected the growth of hay across Kansas. This authorization provides additional relief for many Kansas livestock producers who have suffered through these ongoing severe drought conditions," said Polansky.

Emergency haying is allowed through August 31, 2012. No extensions will be approved under this special authority. Haying will not be permitted within 120 feet of a stream or other permanent water body. Haying is limited to one cutting. Participants shall leave at least 50 percent of each field or contiguous CRP fields unhayed for wildlife. CRP participants can sell, donate, barter, or otherwise exchange hay. The haying privilege may not be subleased.

CRP participants in approved counties should contact the local FSA county office to request emergency haying on an individual contract basis prior to haying. Participants will need to work with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to develop a modified conservation plan, taking into consideration the existence of protected species. If the CRP cover is destroyed, the practice must be re-established at the contract participant's own expense to remain in

compliance with the CRP contract.

Participants must also accept a 10 percent reduction in the annual rental payment for the acres actually hayed. For additional information farmers and ranchers should contact their local FSA County Office.

Thank you again for your time and effort to respond to the Americans that are coping with a continued historic drought and for all of your efforts to support farmers and ranchers. I look forward to working with you on this and other initiatives to improve production agriculture.

Sincerely,

Dale Rodman

Secretary of Agriculture

State of Kansas