

Governor's Drought Declaration Assists Farmers and Ranchers

Today Governor Jeff Colyer signed a drought declaration for all 105 counties in the state of Kansas to provide assistance to farmers and ranchers as they cope with the impact the drought will continue to have on crops and livestock.

This action activates the disaster response efforts at the state level and provides authority for the deployment and use of personnel, supplies, equipment, materials or facilities available to aid the drought response. Importantly, this declaration will temporarily suspend certain motor carrier rules and regulations in order to expedite efforts to transport hay to livestock in drought-stricken areas.

In addition, the Governor issued letters to the Kansas State Executive Director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency and all county executive directors to encourage them to act quickly to review the situation on the ground and consider making a request to permit the use of acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program for haying and grazing. Granting access to CRP acres would provide critical forage resources for Kansas livestock, and would also reduce potential fuel loads to aid in fire suppression.

Secretary of Agriculture Jackie McClaskey attended the signing of the drought declaration. "We are hopeful this early collaboration with our federal partners will allow for immediate relief to Kansas farmers and ranchers," she said, "and we are committed to continuing to work with all of our partners through the duration of the current drought."

At this time, 57 counties in the state of Kansas are at D2 (severe) or D3 (extreme) drought levels. The U.S. Drought Monitor, used to track drought across the United States, identifies general areas of drought and labels them by intensity. The Kansas Drought Response team utilizes this data along with projections from other sources to make recommendations about necessary action for drought conditions. See the latest from the U.S. Drought Monitor at www.droughtmonitor.unl.edu.

Agriculture makes up 45 percent of the state's economy, and contributes \$68 billion to our state. When the state experiences a drought, it can impact each and every Kansan, and KDA will continue to work with farmers and ranchers and all of our partners in agriculture to help provide access to the resources they need to cope with crop losses and impacts on livestock.