



NEWS RELEASE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE • FARM SERVICE AGENCY

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USDA Announces Emergency Haying and Grazing Available to Help Livestock Producers Impacted by Drought

COLUMBUS, Ohio -- July 25, 2012 -- Ohio Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director Steve Maurer announced additional drought relief for Ohio's livestock producers today. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack authorized the release of emergency haying and grazing lands for all Ohio counties for certain practices and acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

USDA will allow acres under CRP to be used for haying or grazing under emergency conditions. This will allow lands that are not yet classified as "under severe drought" but that are "abnormally dry" to be used for haying and grazing. This will increase available forage for livestock.

- Under emergency haying at least fifty percent of each field or contiguous fields must be left unhayed for wildlife. Under emergency grazing at least twenty-five percent of each field or contiguous CRP fields must be left ungrazed for wildlife, or graze not more than seventy-five percent of the stocking rate as determined by NRCS.
- Under emergency haying and grazing CRP participants will be assessed a payment reduction based on the number of acres actually hayed or grazed times the CRP annual rental payment times ten percent.
- Participants may sell hay harvested under emergency provisions. CRP participants who do not own or lease livestock may rent or lease the haying or grazing privilege to an eligible livestock producer.

CRP is a voluntary program that provides producers annual rental payments on their land in exchange for planting resource conserving crops on cropland to help prevent erosion, provide wildlife habitat and improve the environment.

Producers must notify their local FSA office and file a request and receive approval before starting this emergency haying and grazing activity.