

News Release

Nebraska Cattlemen

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For Immediate Release

Nebraska Cattlemen Pleased with FSA Drought Relief Efforts

(June 13, 2006) LINCOLN, NE – Nebraska Cattlemen visited today with Nebraska Farm Service Agency executive director Brian Wolford and received an update on the agency's work to help obtain drought assistance for cattle producers.

Emergency haying and grazing of Conservation Reserve Program land is one way FSA can provide immediate benefits to livestock producers. Because no Nebraska counties have a D3 designation on the Drought Monitor, requests for emergency haying and grazing must be accompanied by evidence that the county has experienced a 40% departure from normal precipitation over the previous four months plus the current month.

On May 24, all Nebraska FSA offices were asked to review moisture information and submit qualifying applications. Nine counties have been approved for *immediate* emergency grazing of CRP and also for emergency haying of CRP as of July 16. Those counties are: Buffalo, Custer, Dawson, Garfield, Hayes, Hitchcock, Loup, Sherman and Wheeler.

Four counties have pending applications in Washington D.C., including Frontier, Furnas, Red Willow, and Valley. Chase and Lincoln Counties have submitted requests that are being processed. Wolford's office continues to get haying and grazing applications from county FSA offices daily.

The Nebraska FSA office requested July 1 as a haying date, but USDA officials in Washington declined that request. NC is continuing discussion with USDA about the potential for a provision that would allow producers in drought declared areas to cooperate with the land owners in eastern half of Nebraska to get the hay to the cows in western Nebraska.

Secretarial Natural Disaster Designations are granted at the request of the Governor with supporting documentation from USDA to prove a 30% countywide loss in any one crop enterprise. Fifty-two western Nebraska counties were required to submit Damage Assessment Reports (DARs) to Wolford's office by June 12, 2006. In addition, any county with a 30% loss in any one crop enterprise was asked to submit a report as well.

Benefits of disaster declarations include low interest loans, FSA loan deferment and tax relief provisions. If you sell more livestock than you normally would in a year because of a drought, you may be able to choose to postpone reporting the gain from selling the additional animals until the next year <http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/industries/article/0,,id=98990,00.html>.

The Nebraska Ag Statistics Service calculates losses and the State Emergency Board reviews and recommends counties to the Governor for a disaster declaration request. Eight southwest counties were submitted to the Secretary by the Governor on June 9.

Wolford said county offices are aware of the drought and have or will submit requests for haying and grazing CRP land and that DARs from 52 counties will be used in consideration of Secretarial Natural Disaster Designations.

The Nebraska Cattlemen association serves as the spokesman for the state's beef cattle industry and represents professional cattle breeders, ranchers and feeders, as well as 48 county and local cattlemen's associations. Its headquarters are in Lincoln and second office in Alliance serves cattlemen in western Nebraska.

This and other Nebraska Cattlemen information is available at www.nebraskacattlemen.org.