



# FACT SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

July 2012

## Emergency Haying and Grazing of Conservation Reserve Program Acres for 2012

### *Overview*

USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a voluntary program available to agricultural producers to help them safeguard environmentally sensitive land. Producers enrolled in CRP establish long-term, resource-conserving covers to improve the quality of water, control soil erosion, and enhance wildlife habitat. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is between 10 and 15 years.

The Food Security Act of 1985, as amended, authorized CRP. The program is also governed by regulations published in 7 CFR Part 1410. The program is implemented by FSA on behalf of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation.

### *Haying and Grazing*

Haying and grazing of CRP acreage is authorized under certain conditions to improve the quality and performance of the CRP cover or to provide emergency relief to livestock producers due to certain natural disasters. There are two types of haying and grazing authorization: managed and emergency.

### *Primary Nesting Season*

Generally, CRP acreage may not be hayed or grazed during the Primary Nesting Season for certain wildlife established by state FSA committees in consultation with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Technical Committee.

### *Emergency Haying and Grazing*

Emergency haying and grazing of CRP acreage may be authorized to provide relief to livestock producers in areas affected by a severe drought or similar natural disaster.

Emergency authorization is provided by either a national FSA office authorization or by a state FSA committee determination utilizing the U.S. Drought Monitor.

### *National FSA Authorization*

County eligibility is based on a county FSA committee request documenting a 40 percent or greater loss in normal hay and pasture production and either:

- for drought conditions, precipitation levels at an average of 40 percent or greater loss of normal precipitation for the 4 most recent months plus the days in the current month before the date of request;

or

- for excessive moisture conditions, precipitation levels at an average of 140 percent or greater increase in normal precipitation during the 4 most recent consecutive months plus the days in the current month before the date of request.

Emergency haying or grazing is limited to the acreage physically located within the boundary of the eligible county or portion of a county. Under this authority, acreage will only be authorized for a specified time and may end earlier than announced if conditions improve.

### *State FSA Committee Determination*

For 2012, a county is authorized for emergency haying and grazing outside the Primary Nesting Season if the county is designated as level "D0-Abnormally Dry", as of July 19, 2012 or later, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. The U.S. Drought Monitor is available online at: <http://www.drought.unl.edu/dm/monitor.html>

Under this special determination, emergency **haying** is authorized to August 31, 2012. Emergency **grazing** is authorized until September 30, 2012.

***Eligible Acreage***

Acreage eligible for managed or emergency haying and grazing includes acreage devoted to the following practices: CP1, CP2, CP4B, CP4D, CP10, CP18B, CP18C and CP38 in certain States.

***Ineligible Acreage***

Acreage ineligible for managed or emergency haying and grazing includes acreage devoted to

- Useful life easements;
- Land within 120 feet of a stream or other permanent water body;
- The following practices: CP3, CP3A, CP5A, CP8A, CP9, CP11, CP12, CP15A, CP15B, CP17A, CP21, CP22, CP23, CP24, CP25, CP27, CP28, CP29, CP30, CP31, CP32, CP33, CP35A-I, CP36, CP37, CP38 in certain States, CP39, CP40, CP41 and CP42.

***Modified Conservation Plan***

Before CRP acreage is declared eligible for haying or grazing, a modified conservation plan developed by NRCS or a technical service provider must be obtained. The modified conservation plan must be site specific, include the authorized duration, and reflect local wildlife needs and concerns. The primary purpose must be to maintain vegetative cover, minimize soil erosion, and protect water quality and wildlife habitat quality.

***File Request Before Starting***

CRP participants requesting emergency or managed haying and grazing must file a request with their county FSA office indicating the acreage to be hayed or grazed before the activity begins.

***Required Payment Reduction***

The CRP-authorizing legislation requires a payment reduction to be assessed. Generally, CRP participants are assessed a haying or grazing payment reduction of 25 percent. For 2012 only, the 25 percent haying and grazing payment reduction has been reduced to 10 percent.

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