



Natural Resources Conservation Service
210 Walnut Street, Room 693
Des Moines, IA 50309-2180

July 31, 2012

IOWA BULLETIN NO. IA440-12-5

SUBJECT: PGM – COMPATIBLE USE AUTHORIZATIONS (CUA) ON EXISTING
EASEMENT AREAS

PURPOSE. To provide guidance on using CUAs on existing easement areas.

EXPIRATION DATE. September 30, 2013

To assist farmers affected by drought, USDA Secretary Vilsack is expediting CUA requests for haying and grazing of Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) easements in drought affected areas where haying and grazing is consistent with conservation of wildlife and wetlands. For landowners with land currently enrolled in WRP, Emergency Wetlands Reserve Program (EWRP), or Emergency Watershed Protection Program – Floodplain Easement (EWPP-FPE) the compatible use process provides opportunities to hay or graze easement areas to address short term forage needs and promote wildlife objectives.

As a result, Iowa will expedite review of requests and issuance of CUA for haying or grazing in drought affected counties based on the following:

- CUA requests on easement sites that are within separation distances for selected threatened and endangered (T&E) species will not be approved. See attached list.
- Haying and grazing is prohibited within 30 feet of herbaceous remnant or fen areas.
- Haying or grazing is not allowed in areas where woody vegetation is being established or maintained. However, areas with undesirable woody encroachment or mono-cultures of undesirable vegetation such as reed-canary grass can be targeted for haying or grazing.
- Haying or grazing is not allowed on easements with seedings less than three (3) years old.
- Grazing and haying cannot occur on the same acres in the same year without specific authorization from the National WRP Manager and National Biologist.
- A CUA is requested by, and issued to, the landowner. However, the landowner can enter into a lease or contract with a third-party to implement the haying or grazing activity. The landowner or third-party may receive economic returns resulting from the implementation of a CUA.

Minimum criteria required for haying are as follows:

- Haying may occur between August 2, 2012, and September 1, 2012 (bales must be removed by September 15, 2012).
- No more than 50 percent of the grassland area on the easement can be hayed.
- Minimum remaining stubble height of eight (8) inches.
- Haying is limited to one cutting.
- Haying is prohibited within 30 feet of water bodies and streams.

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Minimum criteria required for grazing are as follows:

- Grazing may occur between August 2, 2012, and September 30, 2012.
 - Grazing shall leave 25 percent of each field ungrazed for wildlife OR graze at not more than 75 percent of the stocking rate as determined by NRCS or a Technical Service Provider.
 - Minimum remaining stubble height of eight (8) inches.
 - Grazing is prohibited within 30 feet of water bodies and streams.
 - Individual units will not be grazed more than once in a growing season.
- Attached are the CUA templates for haying or grazing.

Process

After receiving a landowner request to hay or graze an easement area:

- Review T&E species sites to make sure site is not a T&E site.
- Complete the CUA appropriate for haying or grazing. If the site is going to be grazed, complete grazing plan (template attached).
- Complete the necessary supporting documentation (CP-52 and Section 7 consultation) per instructions.
- Generate a plan map showing the easement area and identifying the acres to be hayed or grazed.

An acceptable grazing plan for easements can be found at:

<http://www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CRP/CRP%20emergency%20Grazing-hayingPlan2012.pdf>

- Upload CUA requests to the shared drive at:

S:\Service_Center\NRCS_statewide_shared\440_PGM_Programs\WRP\2012_Drought_CUA\CUA_Request_Packets

The Assistant State Conservationists for Programs (ASTC-P) will review and approve CUAs and move to:

S:\Service_Center\NRCS_statewide_shared\440_PGM_Programs\WRP\2012_Drought_CUA\CUA_Approvals

The area easement specialists (AES) and district conservationist (DC) will be notified of approved CUA.

Direct questions on drought related CUAs to John Paulin, Wetland Restoration Specialist, at 515/323-2237 or by email at john.paulin@ia.usda.gov.

Jon Hubbert, Acting

Jon Hubbert
Acting State Conservationist

Attachments