

NRCS NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Natural Resources Conservation Service
375 Jackson Street • Suite 600 St. Paul, MN 55101-1854 • (651) 602-7900
Web: <http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov>

Contact:

[Julie MacSwain](#) State Public Affairs Specialist, (651) 602-7859

NRCS Announces Program Assistance Available in Affected Areas in Minnesota

ST PAUL, MN, July 31, 2012 –Minnesota NRCS State Conservationist has announced drought assistance is available to producers in Minnesota impacted by the summer of 2012 drought.

USDA-NRCS will provide focused assistance through consideration of haying and grazing of Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) and Emergency Watershed Protection Program - Flood Plain Easements (EWP-FPE) in the state. In addition, funding will be available to producers to plant cover crops through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

“This announcement is in response to the USDA Secretary Announcement on July 23, 2012 that expedited Compatible Use Authorization (CUA) requests for haying and grazing of the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) easements in drought-affected areas and NRCS’ understanding of the heavy loss of hay and forage impacting livestock producers in Minnesota,” said Baloun.

WRP is a voluntary conservation easement program that provides technical and financial assistance to agricultural landowners to restore and protect valuable wetland resources on their property. Farmers interested in obtaining possible CUA assistance are encouraged to stop by their local USDA NRCS office. For landowners with land currently enrolled in WRP, the CLU process provides NRCS and affected producers the management flexibility to address short-term resource conditions in a manner that promotes both the health of the land and the viability of the overall farming operation.

“Interested landowners should contact local offices if they are interested in haying or grazing easement lands,” said Baloun.

Additionally, producers may seek financial and technical assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). EQIP provides technical and financial help to landowners plan and apply conservation practices that protect soil and water quality.

Helping People Help the Land

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

Minnesota NRCS is allocating \$400k for a special EQIP sign-up that will take place from August 6th through 10th, 2012. The sign-up will focus on the planting of cover crops for supplemental livestock feed and erosion control. The focus area will be in the severely affected drought counties in southern and NW Minnesota. Please visit your local NRCS office for specific locations in the state. Funding priority will be given to livestock producers needing supplemental feed and forage. Should funding allow producers wanting to plant cover crops for erosion control will be considered for funding.

“Planting of cover crops in Minnesota not only provides supplemental feed for livestock operators but also provides erosion control protection,” said Baloun.

For more information about EQIP, EWP or WRP visit the Minnesota NRCS website at www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov

#

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).