Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service Advisory:
Due to persistent drought conditions across Kansas, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) issues the following advisory to all Kansas employees:

"Dry soil conditions, wind speeds, low relative humidity, persistent drought, and current weather have produced unsafe conditions and results outside the defined objectives for completing the prescribed burn practice. Producers with planned burning practices within these areas identified as D1 or higher on the U.S. Drought Monitor map or where similar conditions exist should be discouraged from completing this practice during unsafe burning conditions. Completing the burn may increase the potential for severe wind erosion, place personal property and safety at risk, and produce unfavorable results."

Many potential prescribed burns are being planned and scheduled to accomplish activities within producers’ Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts. This could be either due to an agreement to burn at least once within the contract life or to prepare it for upcoming contract activities like inter-seeding. In any case, the current dry soil conditions, wind speeds, and low relative humidity are producing results outside the defined objectives for which they are planned. Personal safety is also a concern as well as loss of personal property.

Identified NRCS technical assistance requests dealing with Conservation Practice 338, Prescribed Burning, shall address the climatic concerns which currently exist. Conservation plans/contracts and producer/clients who have prescribed burning scheduled should be encouraged to proceed with the use of burning activities only after climatic conditions have improved. In talking to producers, employees should make them aware that they need to check the daily weather conditions to ensure they are appropriate to safely conduct the burns, and also to check the following days which may lead to re-ignition of unburned or smoldering material which makes possible the ignition of additional fuels. Another concern during the dry conditions which we are experiencing this spring is the possibility of wind erosion occurring on previously burned lands.
NRCS recognizes the importance and need of prescribed burning in most plant communities in Kansas. However, identified objectives should only be pursued through the safe and responsible use of prescribed burning. Equally as important as the need for continued prescribed burning activities is the message of use only during safe and predictable climatic conditions. The above mentioned drought monitor is a good tool to use to help identify areas within the state which might experience a higher risk of negative impacts from unsafe burning conditions. However, areas not identified to be in a current drought stress situation are not immune to uncontrollable fire activity when the right conditions exist from day to day. Safe use of this practice and tool should be consistent in all areas of the state under all climatic conditions.

Improved conditions should be documented before U.S. Department of Agriculture encourages future burning.

2-CRP (Rev 5) KS Exhibit 1 encourages prescribed burning on CRP but no longer “requires” a burn on CP25.

2-CRP (Rev 5) KS Exhibit 5 provides alternatives to burning for the required management activity.

2-CRP (Rev 5) Paragraph 426 provides policy for additional time to establish the required cover.

To help with continued monitoring of the U.S Drought Monitor, updated weekly, we are providing the following URL: http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/.

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