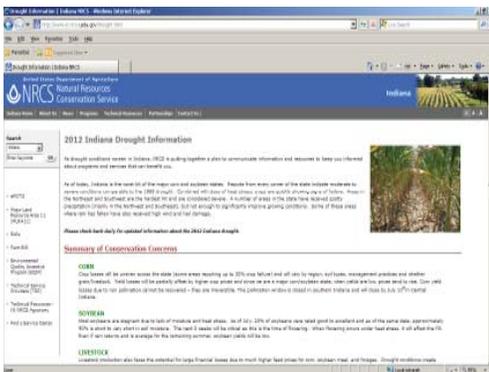


2012 DROUGHT CONDITIONS

As drought conditions worsen in Indiana, NRCS is putting together a plan to communicate information and resources to keep you informed about programs and services that can benefit you.

As of today, Indiana is the worst hit of the major corn and soybean states. Reports from every corner of the state indicate moderate to severe conditions comparable to the 1988 drought. Combined with days of heat stress, crops are quickly showing signs of failure. Areas in the Northeast and Southwest are the hardest hit and are considered severe. A number of areas in the state have received spotty precipitation (mainly in the Northwest and Southeast), but not enough to significantly improve growing conditions. Some of these areas where rain has fallen have also received high wind and hail damage.

NRCS RESOURCES AVAILABLE



WEBSITE

Indiana NRCS has developed a 2012 Drought Webpage that offers visitors vital, up-to-date information about the 2012 drought. Information on this site includes: Summary of Conservation Concerns; Drought Factsheets and Publications; Drought Press Releases; and Drought Web Resources. Please visit the site at:

<http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/drought.html>



INDIANA DROUGHT FACTSHEETS

Indiana NRCS has created a series of factsheets specific to the Indiana drought which will be distributed to the public. These factsheets provide important information on Pastures, Cover Crops and No-Till, Engineering Practices, and Farm Bill Program Flexibility. To obtain a copy of these factsheets, please visit your local NRCS office or download them from the Indiana NRCS Drought webpage link above.



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

NRCS provides technical assistance to address natural resource concerns through the Conservation Planning Process. Our skilled professionals are available to meet landowners in the field to discuss conservation efforts available for drought-stricken areas. Please contact your local NRCS District Conservationist for more information about technical assistance available.

<http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/>

NRCS FARM BILL INFORMATION



FARM BILL PROGRAM FLEXIBILITY INCLUDING: EQIP, WHIP, CSP, WRP, and FEP

- Producers in existing contracts can reschedule practices that cannot be installed
- Some producers are being forced to make critical changes. Farm Bill participants can request a contract cancellation under Natural Disaster with cost recovery waived.
- Variances may be granted if HEL compliance is compromised due to managing crop residue differently in a drought
- Failed practices under contract may be reapplied with financial assistance depending on the circumstances.
- Producers with existing contracts may graze their cover crops (practice 340) for forage due to the drought conditions.
- Cover crops grazed for forage should be managed to maintain an appropriate grazing height.

HAYING AND GRAZING OF WETLAND RESERVE PROGRAM (WRP) and FLOOD EASEMENT PROGRAM (FEP) ACRES

NRCS is working to provide as much relief to drought impacted producers as possible. Effective immediately, WRP and FEP participants may voluntarily request a modification to their WRP and FEP plan to request grazing or forage harvest approval. Program participants that receive prior approval may begin haying or grazing on August 2, 2012. The Compatible Use Authorization process provides NRCS and affected producers the management flexibility to address short-term resource conditions by haying and grazing as long as it furthers the protection and enhancement of the wildlife habitat and wetland functions and values. All haying under drought provisions must be completed by September 1st; while grazing is to be completed by September 30th. Grazing will not be allowed in the same year on the same acreage that is hayed. NRCS will allow haying and grazing of WRP and FEP lands under certain conditions. Landowners should contact their NRCS District Conservationist at the local USDA Service Center to determine eligibility and submit a Compatible Use Authorization request.



WHIP Drought Sign-Up

NRCS is holding a sign up for WHIP funds from **August 2 to August 24, 2012** for practices that will assist producers trying to manage operations under the drought, such as:

- Access Control (for deferred grazing)
- Conservation Crop Rotation
- Cover Crop (to scavenge Nitrogen)
- Forage and Biomass Planting- Annuals
- Heavy Use Area Protection
- Pipeline
- Ponds
- Pumping Plant
- Prescribed Grazing
- Stream Crossing
- Water Well
- Watering Facility