

Press Release

INDIANA FSA AUTHORIZES EMERGENCY HAYING AND GRAZING FOR DROUGHT RELIEF

Indianapolis, September 11, 2002--Indiana Farm Service Agency State Executive Director, John Nidlinger today authorized emergency haying and grazing on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres in Indiana, this was done to provide relief for farmers and ranchers in areas hardest hit by drought and other natural disasters.

“Extreme weather conditions have impacted so many farmers and ranchers this year, particularly livestock producers,” said Nidlinger. “This Administration continues to utilize every available program to provide assistance and this decision will provide additional feed and forage to producers who have lost their hay stocks and grazing lands due to the recent disasters. It is our hope, that in the American tradition of neighbor helping neighbor, CRP participants in areas not affected by these disasters will make their CRP acreage available for haying or grazing or donate hay to those in need.”

Generally, to be approved for emergency haying or grazing, a county must have suffered at least a 40-percent loss of normal moisture and forage for the preceding four-month qualifying period. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has notified its State Committees that the 40-percent loss criterion no longer applies. State FSA committees may limit the area within the states if conditions do not warrant haying and grazing in all areas. The whole state of Indiana has been approved. CRP participants, have until Nov. 30, 2002, to submit applications with their local FSA office for emergency haying or grazing. Conditions for participation and other details are available from local FSA offices.

CRP participants who do not own or lease livestock may donate, rent or lease the hay or the haying or grazing privileges. CRP annual rental payments made to participants will be reduced 25 percent to account for the areas hayed or grazed, unless the hay or the haying or grazing privileges are donated. For the welfare of wildlife, at least 25 percent of the CRP contract acreage must be left ungrazed and 50 percent unhayed.

USDA has developed a website for producers to list information concerning the need for hay or the availability of hay for sale or donation. More than 600 ads have been posted to the site; the majority from people selling hay, and more than 9,700 sessions have been recorded. The Hay Net may be found on the FSA Internet home page at <http://www.usda.fsa.gov>.

CRP is a voluntary program that offers annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term resource-conserving cover on eligible land. Following contacting the local office this action will permit CRP participants to graze livestock or hay on CRP acreage.

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