



Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Oklahoma Newsletter - July 2022

Oklahoma

Natural Resources Conservation Service



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A Message from the State Conservationist

One of the priorities for NRCS this year is to expand and enhance our outreach efforts. The agency wants to ensure that all of our potential customers are aware of the assistance available from NRCS. This effort has led to new partnerships and new approaches to reaching all producers especially underserved producers who may have never utilized NRCS services. With this in mind, NRCS has partnered with several key organizations to implement the Conservation and Agriculture Reach Everyone (CARE) Project. CARE is a collaboration between the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts (OACD), the Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project (OBHRP), the Texas Agriforestry Small Farmers and Ranchers, and individual conservation districts to increase the number of socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers that are accessing NRCS technical and financial assistance. The project is focused on identifying and empowering socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers in communities that are willing to be CARE Champions and provide information on conservation back to their communities. Each CARE Champion completes a demonstration project in either soil health or invasive species removal. Through collaboration with the Oklahoma Conservation Commission, each champion receives \$70/acre for up to 40 acres for their project. Champions also participate in educational and networking opportunities with each other and conservation leadership. Each champion also hosts a field day. There are a lot of field days coming up now through September. For information about the field days please visit OACD event calendar at: <https://www.okconservation.org/events>



Looking at last week's drought data, severe drought or worse has increased almost 8 percentage points from last week at 22.39 percent of the state. (Last week's percentage was 14.7). Moderate drought has increased significantly since last week, jumping from last week's 31 percent to this week's 62.7 percent of the state. One hundred percent of Oklahoma is under abnormally dry conditions, up 36 percentage points from last week's 64 percent. The 6-10 day precipitation outlook shows the majority of Oklahoma at a very low percent for rainfall and with record heat upcoming for the same period, it appears the state is headed for increased drought conditions. NRCS can assist producers with grazing plans that will help prepare for stressed forage that comes with drought conditions. Soil health practices, grazing management systems, and water well development for livestock water are all practices that farmers and ranchers can utilize during drought conditions.

Gary O'Neill, State Conservationist

Looney Farm of Oklahoma Featured at USDA



Meet Carrie Chlebanowski a “reformed suburbanite” from Alex, Oklahoma. Carrie, her husband, and children moved from the suburbs of Edmond to their 10-acre paradise in February 2015. However, it wasn’t until the spring of 2018 that they brought The Looney Farm to life.

Carrie will be speaking at the Oklahoma Women in Agriculture on August 4th in Oklahoma City. The link to the meeting is in the dates to remember section. To read the full story [click here](#).

To see a short video on how a Seasonal High Tunnel system could help your farming operation follow this link. <https://youtu.be/ieR98S6QCRO>

Conservation Practice of the Month

Watering Facility (614)



As we enter into the hottest part of the year in Oklahoma and we begin to see the drought conditions increase, this is the time to realize and plan for future needs of your farming and ranching operation. Consider a **watering facility** that stores or provides drinking water to livestock or wildlife

The Oklahoma Standards and Specifications information: [click here](#).

Management and Strategy | Job Postings

Upcoming Vacancy Announcements:

- Public Affairs Specialist, GS 5/7/9 - Stillwater, Ok
- Economist, GS 5/7/9 - Stillwater, Ok
- Archeologist, GS 9/11 - Stillwater, Ok
- Ag Engineer, GS 9/11/12
 - Woodward
 - McAlester

- GS-5/6/7 Soil Conservation Technician
 - Hobart
 - Cherokee
 - Newkirk
 - Clinton
 - Holdenville

The best way to stay updated on job postings is to check [USA Jobs](#) often and sign up for notifications for job announcements.

All jobs with NRCS are listed and posted on USAJobs.

Photo of the Month



Photo by Sonya Webster from Chance, OK. To enter a photo in this month's contest, email the full resolution photo to NRCSinfo-OK@usda.gov

Dates to Remember

These are events that NRCS and FSA will have representatives at the meeting if you have questions or want to visit.

July

- July 21-22 [Oklahoma Local Ag Collaborative Regional Workshop](#) in Lawton, Ok
- July 22-23 [Oklahoma Cattleman Annual Convention](#) in Norman, Ok

August

- August 4-5, [Oklahoma Women in Ag](#) in Oklahoma City

FSA Offers Joint Financing Option on Direct Farm Ownership Loans

The USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) [Direct Farm Ownership loans](#) can help farmers and ranchers become owner-operators of family farms, improve and expand current operations, increase agricultural productivity, and assist with land tenure to save farmland for future generations.

There are three types of Direct Farm Ownership Loans: regular, down payment and joint financing. FSA also offers a [Direct Farm Ownership Microloan](#) option for smaller financial needs up to \$50,000.

Joint financing allows FSA to provide more farmers and ranchers with access to capital. FSA lends up to 50 percent of the total amount financed. A commercial lender, a State program or the seller of the property being purchased, provides the balance of loan funds, with or without an FSA guarantee. The maximum loan amount for a joint financing loan is \$600,000, and the repayment period for the loan is up to 40 years.

The operation must be an eligible farm enterprise. Farm Ownership loan funds cannot be used to finance nonfarm enterprises and all applicants must be able to meet general eligibility requirements. Loan applicants are also required to have participated in the business operations of a farm or ranch for at least three years out of the 10 years prior to the date the application is submitted. The applicant must show documentation that their participation in the business operation of the farm or ranch was not solely as a laborer.

For more information about farm loans, contact your County USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov.

Five Facts About the United States Drought Monitor

This is likely no surprise to you, but drought persists across the western U.S. and is intensifying in some areas. No geographic area is immune to the potential of drought at any given time. The U.S. Drought Monitor provides a weekly drought assessment, and it plays an important role in USDA programs that help farmers and ranchers recover from drought.

Fact #1 - Numerous agencies use the Drought Monitor to inform drought-related decisions.

The map identifies areas of drought and labels them by intensity on a weekly basis. It categorizes the entire country as being in one of six levels of drought. The first two, None and Abnormally Dry (D0), are not considered to be drought. The next four describe increasing levels of drought: Moderate (D1), Severe (D2), Extreme (D3) and Exceptional (D4).

While many entities consult the Drought Monitor for drought information, drought declarations are made by federal, state and local agencies that may or may not use the Drought Monitor to inform their decisions. Some of the ways USDA uses it to determine a producer's eligibility for certain drought assistance programs, like the Livestock Forage Disaster Program and Emergency Haying or Grazing on Conservation Reserve Program acres and to "fast-track" Secretarial drought disaster designations.

Fact #2 - U.S. Drought Monitor is made with more than precipitation data.

When you think about drought, you probably think about water, or the lack of it. Precipitation plays a major role in the creation of the Drought Monitor, but the map's author considers numerous indicators, including drought impacts and local insight from over 450 expert observers around the country. Authors use several dozen indicators to assess drought, including precipitation, streamflow, reservoir levels, temperature and evaporative demand, soil moisture and vegetation health. Because the drought monitor depicts both short and long-term drought conditions, the authors must look at data for multiple timeframes. The final map produced each week represents a summary of the story being told by all the pieces of data. To help tell that story, authors don't just look at data. They converse over the course of the map-making week with experts across the country and draw information about drought impacts from media reports and private citizens.

Fact #3 - A real person, using real data, updates the map. Each week's map author, not a computer, processes and analyzes data to update the drought monitor. The map authors are trained climatologists or meteorologists from the National Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (the academic partner and website host of the Drought Monitor), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and USDA. The author's job is to do what a computer can't – use their expertise to reconcile the sometimes-conflicting stories told by each stream of data into a single assessment.

Fact #4 - The Drought Monitor provides a current snapshot, not a forecast.

The Drought Monitor is a "snapshot" of conditions observed during the most recent week and builds off the previous week's map. The map is released on Thursdays and depicts conditions based on data for the week that ended the preceding Tuesday. Rain that falls on the

Wednesday just before the USDM's release won't be reflected until the next map is published. This provides a consistent, week-to-week product and gives the author a window to assess the data and come up with a final map.

Fact #5 – Your input can be part of the drought-monitoring process.

State climatologists and other trained observers in the drought monitoring network relay on-the-ground information from numerous sources to the US Drought monitor author each week. That can include information that you contribute.

The Drought Monitor serves as a trigger for multiple forms of federal disaster relief for agricultural producers, and sometimes producers contact the author to suggest that drought conditions in their area are worse than what the latest drought monitor shows. When the author gets a call like that, it prompts them to look closely at all available data for that area, to see whether measurements of precipitation, temperature, soil moisture and other indicators corroborate producer-submitted reports. This is the process that authors follow whether they receive one report or one hundred reports, although reports from more points may help state officials and others know where to look for impacts.

There are multiple ways to contribute your observations: 1. Talk to your state climatologist - Find the current list at the American Association of State Climatologists website. 2. Email - Emails sent to droughtmonitor@unl.edu inform the USDM authors.

3. Become a CoCoRaHS observer - Submit drought reports along with daily precipitation observations to the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network. 4. Submit Condition Monitoring Observer Reports (CMOR) - go.unl.edu/CMOR.

For more information, read our Ask the Expert blog with a NDMC climatologist or visit farmers.gov/protection-recovery.

Disaster Assistance Available for Livestock Losses

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides assistance to you for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by adverse weather, disease and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law.

For disease losses, FSA county committees can accept veterinarian certifications that livestock deaths were directly related to adverse weather and unpreventable through good animal husbandry and management.

For 2022 livestock losses, you must file a notice within 30 calendar days of when the loss is first apparent. You then must provide the following supporting documentation to your local FSA office no later than 60 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the eligible loss condition occurred.

- Proof of death documentation



- Copy of grower's contracts
- Proof of normal mortality documentation

USDA has established normal mortality rates for each type and weight range of eligible livestock, i.e. Adult Beef Cow = 1.5% and Non-Adult Beef Cattle (less than 250 pounds) = 5%. These established percentages reflect losses that are considered expected or typical under "normal" conditions.

In addition to filing a notice of loss, you must also submit an application for payment by March 1, 2023.

For more information, contact your County USDA Service Center or visit fsa.usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).



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