

**Natural Resources Conservation Service
Report To
Papio-Missouri River NRD Board
April 11, 2013
Neil Jensen, District Conservationist**



USDA Designates 89 Counties in Nebraska as Primary Natural Disaster Areas with Assistance to Surrounding Counties

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has designated 89 counties in Nebraska as primary natural disaster areas due to damages and losses caused by the recent drought. All counties located within the Papio-Missouri River NRD are included in the designation.

The 89 counties in NE were designated natural disaster areas April 10, 2013, making all qualified farm operators in the designated areas eligible for low interest emergency (EM) loans from USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses.

Actions taken by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack in 2012 to provide assistance to producers impacted by the drought included:

- Extended emergency grazing on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres, freeing up a record 2.8 million acres and as much as \$200 million in forage and feed for ranchers during a challenging time.
- Purchased \$170 million of pork, lamb, chicken, and catfish for federal food nutrition assistance programs, including food banks, to help relieve pressure on American livestock producers and bring the nation's meat supply in line with demand.
- Reduced the emergency loan rate, from 3.75 percent to 2.375 percent, as well as making emergency loans available earlier in the season.
- Allowing haying or grazing of cover crops without impacting the insurability of planted 2013 spring crops.
- USDA worked with crop insurance companies to provide flexibility to farmers, and one-third of all policyholders took advantage of the extended payment period.

- Authorized \$16 million in existing funds from the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to target states experiencing exceptional and extreme drought.
- Transferred \$14 million in unobligated program funds into the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) to help farmers and ranchers rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters and for carrying out emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought.
- Authorized haying and grazing of Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) easement areas in drought-affected areas where haying and grazing is consistent with conservation of wildlife habitat and wetlands.
- Lowered the penalty on CRP acres used for emergency haying or grazing, from 25 percent to 10 percent in 2012.
- Simplified the Secretarial disaster designation process and reduced the time it takes to designate counties affected by disasters by 40 percent.

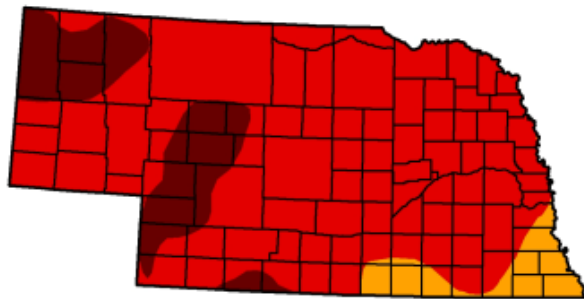
U.S. Drought Monitor

April 9, 2013
Valid 7 a.m. EST

Nebraska

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	0.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	94.02	15.23
Last Week (04/02/2013 map)	0.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	94.04	75.72
3 Months Ago (01/08/2013 map)	0.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	96.20	77.46
Start of Calendar Year (01/01/2013 map)	0.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	96.20	77.46
Start of Water Year (09/25/2012 map)	0.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	97.94	73.25
One Year Ago (04/03/2012 map)	48.89	51.11	2.84	0.00	0.00	0.00



Intensity:



The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>



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David Miskus, NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Climate Prediction Center



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