

**Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Report To
Papio-Missouri River NRD Board
August 9, 2012
Neil Jensen, District Conservationist**



NRCS PROVIDES ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS IN DROUGHT AREAS

Nebraska NRCS is available to provide financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers through the Drought Relief Special Initiative. Producers may apply for assistance August 6 - 15, 2012.

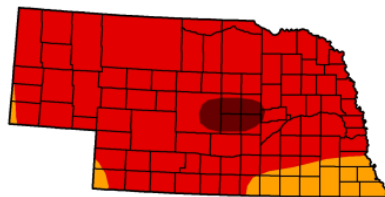
The prolonged lack of rainfall combined with excessive heat has resulted in a dramatic reduction in available forage for livestock producers and increased the risk of soil erosion on land without sufficient ground cover. The purpose of this initiative is to offer assistance to farmers and ranchers impacted by the drought.

**U.S. Drought Monitor
Nebraska**

August 7, 2012
Valid 7 a.m. EST

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	0.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	91.17	3.46
Last Week (07/31/2012 map)	0.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	83.00	3.46
3 Months Ago (05/08/2012 map)	73.30	26.70	5.24	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Calendar Year (12/27/2011 map)	71.68	28.32	13.81	0.65	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year (09/27/2011 map)	75.70	24.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
One Year Ago (08/02/2011 map)	92.24	7.76	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00



Intensity:

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Drought - Moderate
- D2 Drought - Severe
- D3 Drought - Extreme
- D4 Drought - Exceptional

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

<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>

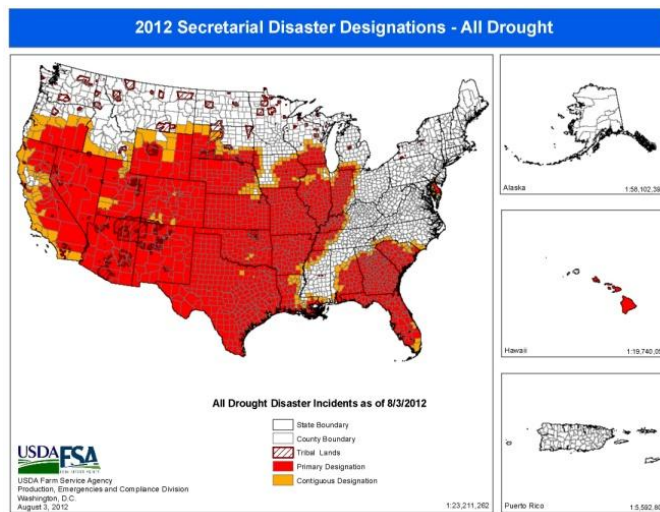


Released Thursday, August 9, 2012
Mark Svoboda, National Drought Mitigation Center

The Drought Relief Special Initiative assistance will be available for land located in any part of a county that has been designated a D3 (Extreme) or D4 (Exceptional) drought zone, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor map dated July 24, 2012, or later. Drought Monitor maps are available on line and are updated every Thursday morning.

Conservation practices available to producers through the Drought Relief Special Initiative include: cover crops, critical area planting, fencing, deferred grazing, forage and biomass planting, pipeline, well and pumping stations for livestock water, range planting and more. Interested participants are encouraged to visit their local NRCS field office to learn more about the assistance available.

Additional Emergency Funding to Assist Livestock and Crop Producers



To assist producers facing extreme drought conditions, USDA announced that it will utilize nearly \$16 million in financial and technical assistance to immediately help crop and livestock producers in 19 states cope with the adverse impacts of the historic drought. In addition, USDA will initiate a transfer of \$14 million in unobligated program funds

into the Emergency Conservation Program. These funds can be used to assist in moving water to livestock in need, providing emergency forage for livestock, and rehabilitating lands severely impacted by the drought. Together these efforts should provide nearly \$30 million to producers struggling with drought conditions.

Within the last month, USDA has opened the Conservation Reserve Program to emergency haying and grazing, has lowered the borrower interest rate for emergency loans, and has worked with crop insurance companies to provide more flexibility to farmers. USDA has also announced the following:

- Allowing producers to modify current EQIP contracts to allow for grazing, livestock watering, and other conservation activities to address drought conditions.
- Authorizing 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.
- Lowering the reduction in the annual rental payment to producers on CRP acres used for emergency haying or grazing from 25 percent to 10 percent in 2012.
- Simplifying the Secretarial disaster designation process and reduced the time it takes to designate counties affected by disasters by 40 percent.



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