

Northern plains drought worsens, USDA responds

Northern plains drought worsens. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) responds with expanded emergency federal program measures on Conservation Reserve Program Acres.

(BOZEMAN) July 11 – As conditions deteriorate and drought expands across much of the Northern Plains, the USDA is offering assistance to farmers and ranchers through numerous federal farm program provisions and continues to monitor the situation to ensure all viable program flexibilities are offered to producers.

Today, USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) acting State Executive Director in Montana, Amy Webbink, announced that Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue has authorized emergency haying on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands beginning July 16 through Aug. 30 for counties in Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota designated as D2 or greater on the U.S. Drought Monitor.

Similar to the authorization for Emergency Grazing announced last month, this authorization includes any county with any part of its border located within 150 miles of a county eligible for emergency haying of CRP based on the U.S. drought monitor.

Increased demand for hay has further depleted already low levels of hay stock. As of May 1, Montana and North Dakota reported the lowest hay stock since 2013 and since 2014 in South Dakota.

"We are offering any and all

USDA program options that will provide farmers and ranchers relief from the devastating impacts of prolonged drought," said Webbink.

Landowners interested in emergency haying of CRP acres should contact their local FSA office and meet with their local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff to obtain a modified conservation plan to include emergency haying.

Not all CRP practices qualify for emergency haying. July 15 marks the end of the Primary Nesting Season in Montana. Due to the severe drought conditions, authorization for emergency haying may begin July 16 in North Dakota and South Dakota. Individual conservation plans will take into consideration wildlife needs.

Eligible CRP participants can hay their acreage for their own use or may grant another producer use of CRP land for haying purposes. There will be no CRP annual rental payment reductions assessed for acres hayed under this emergency authority.

According to Webbink, this emergency CRP haying authorization is an added resource to an extensive portfolio of drought assistance programs and emergency provisions offered by USDA agencies and currently available to eligible producers having a qualifying drought loss or related need.

Emergency CRP Grazing - In June, Secretary Perdue authorized emergency grazing of CRP acres during the primary nesting season in Montana, North Dakota

and South Dakota in counties indicated as D2 or greater on the U.S. Drought Monitor. This authorization was further expanded to include any county with any part of its border located within 150 miles of a county designated as level "D2 Drought - Severe" or higher according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. Grazing is authorized through Sept. 30, unless conditions improve. In Montana, 1,379,913 acres are currently enrolled under CRP.

FSA Farm Loan Livestock Physical Control Requirement Flexibility – USDA will authorize up to a 12 month exemption to the FSA farm loan requirement that borrowers maintain physical control of livestock during the term of the loan. This exemption will allow livestock producers the option of sending livestock to feedlots, drylots or otherwise relocate livestock to locations where feed, forage and water needs can be met. Borrowers must contact FSA prior to moving livestock out of state.

Emergency Loan Program – Available to producers with agriculture operations located in a county under a primary or contiguous Secretarial Disaster designation. These low interest loans help producers recover from production and physical losses.

These and a number of other disaster assistance programs are available to farmers and ranchers. For more information on disaster assistance programs and loans visit www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster or, Pondera County FSA, 406 N. Main, Conrad, 278-7611.



Courtesy Photo for the I-O

VISITORS FROM HELSINKI

— Both Professors from Finland visited the MSU Western Triangle Agricultural Research Center (WTARC) in Conrad recently. Their visit to the center was to help the team of entomologists to development management strategies for wireworms, pea leaf weevil and flea beetles. From the left Dr. Gadi V.P. Reddy, Dr. Heikki Hokkanen and Dr. Ingeborg Menzler-Hokkanen.

Professors from Finland visit MSU Research Center in Conrad

Submitted to the I-O by Julie Orcutt and Gadi V.P. Reddy, Ph.D.

Dr. Heikki M.T. Hokkanen and Dr. Ingeborg Menzler-Hokkanen from the University of Helsinki, Finland visited Montana State University (MSU) Western Triangle Agricultural Research Center (WTARC) in Conrad from July 9 - 16.

Drs. Hokkanen and Gadi V.P. Reddy have known each other for many years and collaborated on various scientific aspects. Both Professors from Finland visited the research center to help the team of entomologists to development management strategies for wireworms, pea leaf weevil and flea beetles.

The current entomology team members include Professor Gadi V.P. Reddy, postdoctoral researchers Shabeg Briar, Govinda Shrestha and Anamika Shrestha, research associate/assistants Ramadevi Gadi and Debbie Miller and a graduate student, Ramandeep Sandhi Kaur.

One of the main objectives is to use the predatory nematodes and insect killing fungi for control of the insect species that are affecting the cereal, pulses

and canola crops in the Golden Triangle areas of Montana. The team also discussed studying the effects of insect killing pathogens (biological control agents) against non-target organisms such as ground beetles, lady beetles and pollinators.

Drs. Hokkanen and Menzler-Hokkanen are currently developing a European based project "EcoStack" for a total amount of 10 million Euros that will include subcontracting to the Research Center in Conrad. Additionally, the research exchange visits and collaboration between the University of Helsinki and MSU WTARC will enhance the research efforts and eventually complement the programs at both institutions.

Dr. Hokkanen is serving as the President and Organizer for the XXVI International Congress of Entomology to be held in Helsinki, Finland from July 19 - 24, 2020. Also, he is an Editor-in-Chief and Dr. Ingeborg is Managing Editor for an international journal *Arthropod-Plant Interactions*.

Editor's note: Orcutt is an Administrative Assistant for WTARC. Dr. Reddy is Professor of Entomology/Insect Ecology for WTARC.

Marias Fair
76th Annual Fair
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<p>Daily</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 am • Gate Opens 10 am • 4-H Exhibit Building Opens 12 pm • Exhibit Buildings Open 1 pm • Free Act: Freddie Prez Attractions Midway Opens — Kids Fun Zone & Action Entertainment 9 pm • Exhibit Buildings Close 10 pm • Midway / Free Act Closes All Day • Enjoy the Tractor Show <p>Thursday, July 20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11 am • Pet & Doll Parade — Main Street 6:30 pm • Mutton Busting 7 pm • "Bull Riders Canada" Bull Riding 9 pm • Boone Country Band performs <p>Friday, July 21</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6:15 pm • FFA Heifer Auction — Grandstands 7 pm • PRCA Rodeo — Marias River Stampede * 9 pm • "Divas Through the Decades" perform 	<p>Saturday, July 22</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 am • Rodeo Slack 11 am • Marias Fair Parade — Main Street 3 pm • 4-H Market Livestock Sale 6:30 pm • Mutton Busting 7 pm • PRCA Rodeo — Marias River Stampede 9 pm • Copper Mountain Band performs <p>Sunday, July 23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 pm • "Chain & Bang" Demolition Derby Dusk • Fireworks following the Derby
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Tickets / Information

Admission to Midway, Vendors & Exhibits is FREE every day.

* Veterans receive FREE admission on Friday to Grandstand Event with proper ID.

Grandstand Events:

Adults – \$20 • Students / Seniors – \$10
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Season Pass Prices:

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Everyone is welcome - see you there!

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