

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced a two-month extension for emergency grazing on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres, freeing up forage and feed for ranchers as they look to recover from this challenging time.

This flexibility for ranchers marks the latest action by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to provide assistance to producers impacted by the drought, which has included opening CRP and other conservation acres to emergency haying and grazing.

To assist producers, USDA is permitting farmers and ranchers in drought-stricken states that have been approved for emergency grazing to extend grazing on CRP land through Nov. 30, 2012, without incurring an additional CRP rental payment reduction. The period normally allowed for emergency grazing lasts through Sept. 30.

The extension applies to general CRP practices. New grazing requests should be submitted to Farm Service Agency (FSA) field offices indicating the acreage to be grazed. USDA's continuing efforts to add feed to the marketplace benefits all livestock producers, including dairy, during this drought.

The extension of emergency grazing on CRP acres does not apply to the following environmentally sensitive practices: CP8A-Grass Waterway-Non-Easement; CP23-Wetland Restoration; CP23A-Wetland Restoration-Non-Floodplain; CP27-Farmable Wetlands Pilot Wetland; CP28-Farmable Wetlands Pilot Buffer; CP37-Duck Nesting Habitat; and CP41-FWP Flooded Prairie Wetlands.

There is no extension of emergency haying which ended Aug. 31, 2012.