USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director Dan Steinkruger urged livestock producers affected by 2012 natural disasters such as drought or fires to keep thorough records of their livestock and feed losses, including additional expenses for such things as feed purchases because of lost supplies.

"There are extraordinary circumstances caused by a variety of disasters such as fire, drought, heat and storms," Steinkruger said. "Each of these events causes economic consequences for ranchers and producers including cattle, sheep and dairy operations, bee keepers, and poultry producers."

FSA recommends that owners and producers record all pertinent information of natural disaster consequences, including:

- Documentation of the number and kind of livestock that have died, supplemented if possible by photographs or video records of ownership and losses
- Dates of death supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts
- Costs of transporting livestock to safer grounds or to move animals to new pastures and feed purchases if supplies or grazing pastures are destroyed
- Farmers and ranchers who have not filed acreage reports for 2012 pastures with FSA should go ahead and file the report.

The department's authority to operate the five disaster assistance programs authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill expired on Sept. 30, 2011.

This includes SURE; the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP); the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP); the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP); and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP).

Steinkruger noted, "Both the Senate and House have Farm Bills pending that provide emergency livestock assistance for 2012. Farmers and ranchers should maintain appropriate records in case this legislation passes in the coming months."

Questions should be directed to local FSA Offices across Nebraska.