• USDA

Manhattan – Adrian J. Polansky, State Executive Director of the Kansas Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced Friday that emergency haying and grazing of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage has been approved for 66 counties in Kansas effective Tuesday.

The Kansas FSA State Committee used their authority with the D2 Severe drought designations on the U.S. Drought Monitor Map to authorize the following counties once the primary nesting and brood rearing season concludes on July 15:

Barber, Barton, Butler, Chase, Cheyenne, Clark, Comanche, Cowley, Decatur, Edwards, Elk, Ellis, Ellsworth, Finney, Ford, Gove, Graham, Grant, Gray, Greeley, Greenwood, Hamilton, Harper, Harvey, Haskell, Hodgeman, Jewell, Kearny, Kingman, Kiowa, Lane, Lincoln, Logan, Marion, McPherson, Meade, Mitchell, Morris, Morton, Ness, Norton, Osborne, Pawnee, Phillips, Pratt, Rawlins, Reno, Republic, Rice, Rooks, Rush, Russell, Scott, Sedgwick, Seward, Sheridan, Sherman, Smith, Stafford, Stanton, Stevens, Sumner, Thomas, Trego, Wallace and Wichita.

“This authorization provides relief for many Kansas livestock producers who have suffered through severe drought conditions,” Polansky said. “The drought has depleted hay supplies and affected the growth of hay and pasture in parts of Kansas. Many livestock producers cannot maintain their current herds without implementation of CRP emergency haying and grazing.”

Due to multiple years of drought and concerns for long term negative impacts to the sustainability of the grass, the Kansas FSA State Committee determined that all 2013 emergency haying and grazing activities will be limited to specific acreage that was not utilized for haying or grazing in 2011 and 2012. This includes all prior 2011 or 2012 grazing or haying activity under emergency or managed practices.

An exception is available in areas where adequate moisture conditions have permitted sufficient cover growth and vigor which justifies future use as determined on a county or area basis within the county. Local officials will be making the initial exception decision by July 16.

Current CRP enrollment in Kansas is 2.3 million acres. The haying and grazing acreage utilized in 2011 and 2012 plus ineligible continuous CRP acreage totals 950,000 acres. This leaves a balance of more than 1.3 million CRP acres to be used for haying and grazing in 2013 in addition to the acreage meeting the adequate moisture exception described above.

Emergency haying in approved counties is allowed through August 15, 2013. Participants must leave at least 50 percent of each field or contiguous CRP field un-hayed for wildlife. Hay must be removed from the field within 30 days from the end of the haying period. Hay cannot be sold. Producers without livestock may rent or lease the haying privileges.

Emergency grazing in approved counties is allowed through September 30, 2013. The grazing timeframe begins when the individual request is approved. All livestock must be removed at the end of the grazing period or when the minimum average height reaches 5 inches. Producers without livestock may rent or lease the grazing privileges.

CRP participants in approved counties shall contact the local FSA county office to request emergency haying or grazing on an individual contract basis prior to haying or grazing. Participants will work with the NRCS to develop a forage management plan. If the CRP cover is destroyed, the practice must be re-established at their own expense to remain in compliance with the CRP contract.

Participants must also accept a 25 percent reduction in the annual rental payment for the acres

actually hayed or grazed. CRP haying and grazing policies are available on-line at www.fsa.usda.gov/ks.