

Farm and
Foreign
Agricultural
Services

Farm
Service
Agency

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**TO Alaska Farm Service Agency State Committee
Danny Consenstein, State Executive Director**

**FROM Northern County Farm Service Agency Committee
Lloyd Wilhelm, County Executive Director**



SUBJECT Haying of CRP Acreage

The Northern County FSA Committee reviewed the current drought conditions affecting Northern County Alaska and the State of Alaska on August 6, 2013. A review of the U.S. Drought Monitor website shows a large portion of the Northern County in a D1 Moderate drought situation. There is a growing area of D-2 designation 50 miles West of Southeast Fairbanks area which is the location of all the CRP contracts for the Northern County.

The County Committee members stated they were receiving calls questioning the availability of hay. Alaska hay and small grain producers had a late spring due to cold conditions that delayed planting of spring grain and forage crops and stunted the hay imergence and early growth. Delta Junction area producers were reporting frost in the ground at the 3 inch depth as late as May 24, 2013. The following week the state experienced above normal temperatures with the Northern County seeing June and July experiencing long extended periods of hot weather with little to no measurable precipitation. Moisture received from June through July was spotty with some areas receiving little to no moisture for season. The soil profile is depleted with little to no reserve moisture in most fields.

Initial reports of hay yields received have been consistent in the ¼ to ½ of normal yield for first cut. Some producers clipped first cut due to stressed condition of field in hopes of normal precipitation and normal second cut. This effort to stimulate 2nd cutting has received mixed results with most producers reporting stunted growth due to high temperatures and below average rainfall. Over 50 percent of producers will not get another cut, because fields did not respond with high temperatures and no rain. Final 2013 crop year hay yields for interior Alaska will be less than 50% of normal with some areas reporting less than 1/3 of normal production.

Livestock owners are inquiring about available feed. If adequate feed is not available they will be looking at culling animals or liquidating herds due to lack of feed. By allowing CRP acreage to be harvested livestock owners would be able to sustain more animals through the winter months. Under

normal situations livestock owners will feed 30 to 40 lbs of feed per day per adult animal for at least a 7 month period. As of January 2011 Alaska had 13500 head of livestock in state. Annual feed usage for the 7 months or 212 days of winter would be 85,860,000.00 lbs or 42,930 tons of feed.

With the current drought condition the state can foresee a 50% or more loss in production which translates into a minimum of 42,930,000.00 pounds or 21,465 ton shortage of hay for this coming winter. This projection is at a 50% loss but many areas continue to project a final yield of 30% of normal.

The estimates reflected in the previous calculations do not consider the hay needs of horse owners or other livestock owners with those animal numbers inflating the number of tons of hay needed for the coming winter.

After reviewing the official Drought Monitor website information, Alaska Crop Weather, and Crop Weather Questionnaire, producer reports, and livestock owner comments and concerns the Northern County Committee requests the State of Alaska be designated eligible for Emergency Haying and Grazing of the 2012 CRP acreage.