

NEWS RELEASE



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Hardisty Announces Haying and Grazing on Indiana Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) Acres

INDIANAPOLIS, July 25, 2012 – USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) is working to provide as much relief to drought impacted producers as possible. Effective immediately, Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) participants may voluntarily request a modification to their WRP plan to request grazing or forage harvest approval.

NRCS State Conservationist, Jane Hardisty, recently announced that all Indiana counties are eligible for drought haying or grazing on land enrolled in the WRP outside of the nesting dates. The nesting season will end on August 1, 2012 and program participants that receive prior approval may begin haying or grazing on August 2, 2012. This, coupled with the release of certain practices and acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program for emergency haying and grazing, provides additional forage opportunities for livestock.

WRP is a voluntary conservation easement program that provides technical and financial assistance to agricultural landowners to restore and protect valuable wetland resources on their property. Producers interested in haying or grazing WRP lands should contact their NRCS District Conservationist at the local USDA Service Center to determine eligibility and submit a Compatible Use Authorization request.

For landowners with land currently enrolled in WRP, the Compatible Use Authorization process provides NRCS and affected producers the management flexibility to address short-term resource conditions in a manner that promotes both the health of the land and the viability of the overall farming operation. As with all compatible use requests, NRCS has the right to prohibit all haying and grazing unless it will further the protection and enhancement of the wildlife habitat and wetland functions and values.

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All haying under drought provisions must be completed by September 1st; while grazing is to be completed by September 30th. Grazing will not be allowed in the same year on the same acreage that is hayed.

Additional program requirements and information about haying and grazing WRP land is available on the Indiana NRCS website at: www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/drought.html or you can visit your local USDA-NRCS field office to talk with staff. Visit www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/directory/field_offices.html to find the nearest USDA Service Center.

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