

August 22, 2012

## NRCS Provides \$1.6 Million in Drought Assistance to Crop and Livestock Producers in Colorado

**La Junta, CO** — In response to the historic drought faced by Colorado's crop and livestock producers, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is providing \$1.6 million in financial and technical assistance through its Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to help producers who are facing exceptional drought conditions.

A map of Colorado's exceptional drought (D4) areas as defined by the National Drought Mitigation Center is located at [http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/DM\\_state.htm?CO,HP](http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/DM_state.htm?CO,HP). Producers are encouraged to visit this website on regular basis, as it is updated when conditions change.

With this limited funding, higher priority will be given to those who have been in the exceptional drought conditions areas of the state the longest and will include additional criteria based on erodible soils and sensitive environmental areas. This will ensure that the funds provided will be applied to the most vulnerable areas of the state.

*"In the short term, EQIP funding will be targeted toward hardest hit drought areas,"* said John Knapp, Area Conservationist, NRCS La Junta Area Office, La Junta. *"NRCS will work closely with producers to address critical resource concerns by implementing a prescribed grazing plan that will help alleviate the drought's impacts."*

While NRCS is offering immediate assistance to producers to cope with the drought, NRCS encourages producers to implement long-term range management conservation plans to help them prepare for future occurrences of drought. Conservation plans will emphasize improving each soil's capacity to be more drought-resilient. EQIP funding will provide help to reduce or address the environmental impacts of the extended drought conditions that Colorado is enduring. This will be accomplished through the prescribed grazing plan.

Colorado will hold a special application signup for producers interested in a prescribed grazing plan that will help with adverse affects of the drought and improve soil and plant health and productivity.

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Through EQIP, producers can apply for financial assistance to provide immediate drought relief. EQIP is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to address natural resource concerns on agricultural and forest land.

Producers are encouraged to visit with their local field office for drought assistance. Additional program requirements and information about EQIP is available on the Colorado NRCS website at [www.co.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.co.nrcs.usda.gov).

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