

## NRCS provides help to farmers in drought areas

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USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service is available to provide assistance to farmers and ranchers through the Drought Relief Special Initiative. Producers may apply for assistance Aug. 6-15.

"The prolonged lack of rainfall combined with excessive heat has resulted in a dramatic reduction in available forage for livestock producers and increased the risk of soil erosion on land without sufficient ground cover," said Craig Derickson, state conservationist. "The purpose of this initiative is to offer assistance to farmers and ranchers impacted by the drought."

The Drought Relief Special Initiative assistance will be available for land located in any part of a county that has been designated a D3 (Extreme) or D4 (Exceptional) drought zone, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor map dated July 24 or later.

"Through this special initiative, farmers and ranchers may apply for assistance to install conservation practices that can help reduce the negative impacts of the current drought, and will help improve the sustainability of their operation in the long run," Derickson said.

Conservation practices available to producers through the Drought Relief Special Initiative include: cover crops, critical area planting, fencing, deferred grazing, forage and biomass planting, pipeline, well and pumping stations for livestock water, range planting and more. Interested participants are encouraged to visit their local NRCS field office to learn more about the assistance available.

"When implemented, these conservation practices will provide additional forage, improve existing forage, and help increase ground cover," Derickson said.