

Drought Information for N.C. Farmers

Updated 9/20/07

Federal Assistance

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has designated 85 North Carolina counties as primary natural disaster areas because of drought-related crop losses. Eleven contiguous counties also received the designation. The disaster designation authorizes the USDA Farm Service Agency to make low-interest emergency loans available to eligible producers in these counties.

Where Can I Buy or Sell Hay?

The N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services offers the **Hay Alert Web site and hotline:**

www.ncagr.com/HayAlert or toll free 1-866-506-6222

This service allows farmers to place free listings searching for or selling hay. Users also can offer or search for hay transportation services. Operators on the hotline will take callers' information and add it to the Web site or search the database for them. The hotline is open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Forage Testing, Pesticides, Plant Pest Issues, Crop Insurance Considerations

Forage testing provides useful information about the nutritional value of feed or forage. This information can be used to adjust the amount of protein and energy supplements used with the feed or forage to meet the needs of animals. It is also important to test forage and grains for **nitrate** and **aflatoxin** levels to avoid production losses. Contact the **NCDA&CS Food and Drug Protection Division, (919) 733-7366**.

Buyers of alternative feeds should ask the seller whether any **pesticides** were applied to the crop prior to harvest, and if so, which pesticides were applied and when. Since many of these crops (corn, soybeans or peanuts) were not originally planned to be used as animal feed, they may have been treated with pesticides that have feeding restrictions on their labels. Buyers need to understand that the use of feed treated with such pesticides could lead to the occurrence of illegal pesticide residues in meat or milk. For information, contact the **NCDA&CS Structural Pest Control and Pesticides Division, (919) 733-3556**.

The movement of hay and other forage from areas quarantined for **imported fire ant** (see map at www.ncagr.com/plantindustry/plant/entomology/ifamap.htm) and **witchweed** (Bladen, Cumberland, Pender, Robeson and Sampson counties) to non-quarantined areas requires both a permit and inspection. If you want to move forage from a witchweed quarantine area, contact the NCDA&CS Plant Industry Division before you begin baling. A permit is not required for moving corn stover from an area quarantined for fire ant to a non-quarantined area. However, baled corn stover should be stored on an impervious or elevated surface to avoid direct ground-to-bale contact, and should be moved within three days. For permits, inspections or information, contact the **Plant Industry Division, 1-800-206-9333**.

If a farmer considers using a damaged crop for other uses and the crop is covered by **crop insurance**, important notification steps should be taken first. In order for producers to protect the integrity of their crop insurance claims and to remain eligible for a potential loss payment, the following steps should be taken:

1. Producers with crop damage due to drought or other causes should contact their crop insurance agent within 72 hours of the discovery of the crop damage.
2. A company loss adjuster will contact the producer to explain any further requirements with regards to field inspections, establishing representative sample areas in the field, and further caring of the crop.
3. In all cases, producers should not destroy their crops or representative sample areas without specific instruction from their crop insurance company loss adjuster.

If loss adjusters cannot visit the farm in a timely manner to designate a representative sample of the crop loss, the approved insurance provider may obtain the producer's verbal agreement to establish and maintain representative sample areas of mature production for appraisal purposes. In all cases, farmers should contact their **insurance agent** for guidance.

Web Resources

- NCDA&CS Drought Resource Information Page, **www.ncagr.com/drought** – A variety of informational sources and links
- N.C. Drought Management Advisory Council, **www.ncdrought.org** – Latest drought status
- N.C. Cooperative Extension, **www.ces.ncsu.edu/disaster/drought/** – Drought management information for a variety of commodities