

Frequently Asked Questions about NCDA&CS Hay Relief

Updated February 21, 2008

The N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has launched several initiatives to assist livestock producers and equine owners in locating and transporting hay to their farms to cope with the ongoing drought. The information below answers common questions about the department's hay-relief programs.

How can I find hay?

The NCDA&CS has established the Hay Alert Web site (www.ncagr.com/hayalert) and toll-free hotline (1-866-506-6222) to assist producers in their search for hay. Producers can place hay-wanted listings and search for hay and transportation services near them. The database is searchable by county, state and Canadian province. Producers who do not have Internet access can call the hotline for assistance in searching for hay.

What type of cost-share assistance is available?

The NCDA&CS has set up the Ag/Equine Partners Hay Relief Program to help producers offset a portion of the cost of transporting hay to their farms from outside North Carolina. The program reimburses farmers at a rate of 50 cents per mile round trip or \$1 per loaded mile, up to \$500. These reimbursements will be made on a first-come, first-served basis until funds are exhausted. The extent of funds is entirely dependent on the level of donations or appropriations received. Producers are eligible for reimbursement on a maximum of three loads delivered on or after Dec. 4, 2007. Ag Partners focuses on cattle, sheep and goats, while Equine Partners focuses on horses and other equine.

Is the state giving hay to farmers?

No, there is not any free hay. However, the state set up the Emergency Hay Program to provide emergency stockpiles where livestock owners can purchase hay if they find themselves in desperate need. The NCDA&CS is buying hay and having it transported to locations around the state for resale to farmers at cost, including transportation. The program is open to owners of cattle, horses, sheep, goats and other livestock that eat hay.

What kind of hay is it? What size are the bales? How much do they cost?

The department is sourcing both cattle- and horse-quality hay. The exact type will vary depending on the source. The department is ordering large and small bales. Large bales might be square or round depending on the source, and weigh between 700 and 1,500 pounds. Small bales will be square and weigh 45-55 pounds.

Prices will vary depending on source, distance traveled and market factors. Small bales currently are running \$7-\$8 per bale. Large bales currently cost \$55-\$85 per bale. Keep in mind that these prices are subject to change dramatically as the market fluctuates.

Where is the emergency hay coming from?

The department is sourcing hay from a variety of places in the United States and Canada.

How do I find out when hay is available at a location near me?

The NCDA&CS currently is selling hay at six locations (five research stations and the Piedmont Triad Farmers Market). You should contact those sites directly to find out anticipated delivery dates. For a list of locations, go to www.ncagr.com/hayalert/emergencyhay.htm or call the Hay Alert hotline at 1-866-506-6222.

Can I put my name on a waiting list for hay?

Yes. Each distribution site has started a waiting list. Call the site to add your name to the waiting list. Staff will call you when hay is available for you to buy.

Is there a limit to the number of bales I can buy at one time?

To serve as many people's emergency needs as possible, the program currently limits livestock owners to purchasing up to eight large bales and 60 small bales per day. Limits may be adjusted based on supply and demand.

How long will hay be at the distribution sites?

The department is working to keep a steady supply flowing into the six locations throughout winter. We cannot guarantee specific delivery dates, because delays may occur due to weather or other logistical obstacles. The

Over for more questions and answers

Emergency Hay Program will begin scaling back its hay sales soon. Beginning March 3, distribution sites will scale back sales to Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Starting March 17, sites will sell hay on Tuesdays only. All sites will stop selling hay on April 1, but they will maintain a small inventory of large and small bales that can be used in an emergency.

What is a Premises ID Number, and why do I need one to use the hay programs?

The Premises ID Number is a unique national identification number assigned to locations in North Carolina where animals are born, managed, marketed or exhibited. The critical data gathered through registration will provide state and national animal health officials with necessary contact information in case of a disease concern and help identify animals and premises that may have had direct contact with a foreign animal disease or a domestic disease of concern within 48 hours after discovery.

The Premises ID is required for the Emergency Hay, Ag Partners and Equine Partners programs because it provides an additional check on fraud. It's further proof that you have a livestock operation and are not simply buying hay for resale. The NCDA&CS has received reports of people buying hay through the system and selling it for a profit. The Premises ID provides an efficient way of tracking who buys hay, and how much. The department is also concerned about the possibility of hay coming into the state carrying potentially harmful pests, such as blister beetles and fire ants, or having toxic nitrate levels. If any of these pests or toxins are discovered, having the Premises ID linked to where that hay was distributed is the quickest and most efficient way for the department to notify everyone who might have received hay from the affected batch.

Data collected as part of the N.C. Farm ID premises registration is kept confidential by the NCDA&CS. You do not need a Premises ID Number to post listings on the Hay Alert Web site or hotline.

How do I get a Premises ID Number?

You can download the N.C. Farm ID registration form from the Emergency Hay Web page, www.ncagr.com/hayalert/emergencyhay.htm. You can also request a form by calling the NCDA&CS Veterinary Division at (919) 715-2951. Once you have obtained a form, fill it out and bring it with you to a hay distribution site. This will start the Farm ID registration process and qualify you to purchase hay.

I need a truckload of hay. How do I get it?

If you need a full truckload of hay, you are encouraged to use the Hay Alert Web site (www.ncagr.com/hayalert) or hotline (1-866-506-6222) to find and order hay. By doing this, you could be eligible for transportation cost-share assistance of up to \$500 per load, on up to three loads, through Ag Partners or Equine Partners. This should be more economical than buying hay from the Emergency Hay Program. If you need only a partial load, the NCDA&CS recommends teaming with neighbors to make a full load.

What is being done to prevent price gouging on hay? What if I suspect a scam?

Undoubtedly, the intense demand for hay in the Southeast has driven up prices. If you think you might be a victim of price gouging or a deceptive business practice, contact the N.C. Attorney General's Office at 1-877-5-NO-SCAM.

Where do I turn for more information about coping with the drought?

Hay Alert Hotline: 1-866-506-6222

Hay Alert Web Site: www.ncagr.com/hayalert

Ag Drought Resource Information Page: www.ncagr.com/drought

N.C. Cooperative Extension Drought Management Information: www.ces.ncsu.edu/disaster/drought



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