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**FSA Authorizes Emergency Haying to Permitted Use of  
CRP Land in Flooded Regions - *Permission for Presidential Disaster Counties,  
Previously Granted for Grazing Only***

WASHINGTON, Aug. 15, 2008 - USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) Administrator Teresa Lasseter announced today that certain Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres in 22 states have been released for emergency haying in counties recently designated as Presidential Disaster Areas because of flooding. The release permits a state's FSA committee to approve emergency haying, to begin only after the primary nesting season in counties designated as primary and contiguous disaster areas because of flooding. These counties had previously been released for emergency grazing only.

"This emergency haying will address the flooding in the Midwest and other parts of the country that came at such a critical time in the growing season," Lasseter said. "The grazing assisted farmers and ranchers for their feeding needs then. Haying will help us as we approach fall and winter when livestock feed needs increase."

"We also are carefully balancing vital CRP benefits with emergency production needs. The haying will occur only after the primary nesting season," said Lasseter.

For CRP participants to be approved, they must request the emergency haying from their county FSA office, obtain a modified conservation plan and receive county office approval before beginning to hay. Use of the allowance is subject to a 25 percent reduction in the next CRP rental payments for the acres hayed or grazed. Those who grazed the land under the previous allowance may also apply for haying, but not on the same acreage.

The haying is limited to one cutting, and 50 percent of a field or contiguous fields must be left unhayed for wildlife. The emergency haying authorization ends on Sept. 30, 2008.

The states with counties that may permit haying include Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

Under CRP, farmers and ranchers enroll eligible land in 10- to 15-year contracts with USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC). The FSA administers CRP on behalf of CCC. Participants plant appropriate cover such as grasses and trees in crop fields and along streams. These plantings help prevent soil and nutrients from running into regional waterways and affecting water quality. The long-term vegetative cover also improves wildlife habitat and soil quality.

Additional details, including the grazing-only release (No. 0179), Fact Sheets, Maps and statistics, are available on the Web at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation>.

NOTE: Farm Service Agency (FSA) news releases are available on the Web at FSA's home page: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.