



Resources for Farmers as the Drought Continues

Release Date: July 25, 2012

Contact: Ashley Huibregtse, 608-224-5002
Jim Dick, Communications Director, 608-224-5020

EDITORS NOTE: There is a video version of this release featuring Secretary Ben Brancel. It can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/c71292c>.

MADISON – Dry soil and withering crops are continuing reminders of the drought conditions stretching across much of Wisconsin. We can't make it rain, but the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) can remind farmers of available resources in the state to deal with the dry situation.

“The impact of the 2012 drought continues to expand north in Wisconsin, and we are aware of the immediate and long term challenges facing our state’s farmers,” said DATCP Secretary Ben Brancel. “During a drought, it is critical to work with your local University of Wisconsin-Extension, veterinarians and nutritionists to make the best decisions for each individual operation.”

Many farmers are considering the options for their crops, and for some, it may include an early harvest. Before making any decision on whether to chop your corn early, contact your local Farm Service Agency to report damages. If you have crop insurance, contact your agent as well to check for their individual requirements.

An early harvest for livestock feed raises questions about toxicity. Make sure it's safe to feed to your animals. Samples should be taken before feeding and ensiling to prevent nitrate poisoning in livestock.

The feed ration may need to change to include different ingredients not normally used but available. By evaluating the feed, the ration can allow farmers to maintain production levels.

Contact your local veterinarian for assistance with heat stress on livestock. Provide unrestricted access to clean, and preferably cool drinking water. Especially with young stock in hutches, keep the temperatures down with shade and increased air flow.

If your farm has access to irrigation equipment, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) can help with fast review of emergency crop irrigation from lakes and rivers. The DNR is also opening, for a limited time, selected acres of state land for haying and grazing. Farmers interested in that program can call the DNR toll free 1-888-936-7463.

Farmers in the state who have hay or other forage they can provide to farmers running short due to the drought can share that information on the University of Wisconsin-Extension’s Farmer to Farmer Hay, Forage and Corn List and the Farmer to Farmer Pasture Rental websites.

Contact information for these programs and general drought information for the state can be found at the state’s Ready Wisconsin website, <http://readywisconsin.wi.gov>. DATCP’s Wisconsin Farm Center is also available to answer questions, provide assistance and make referrals for farmers.

“I encourage farmers to contact the Wisconsin Farm Center to locate the best resources available for your individual situation.” added Brancel. “Staff can direct you to assistance with financial planning to accommodate extra costs, mediation with creditors or find the right contact for locating feed or needed help.”

The Wisconsin Farm Center is available weekdays, 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Farmers can contact the Farm Center toll-free at 1-800-942-2474 or by email at farmcenter@wisconsin.gov. ###

