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Drought Assistance Programs

The 2023 drought has brought challenges to agriculture across the state. In response, organizations and agencies are pulling together to support this struggling segment of our economy. MU Extension has drought information on feed alternatives, costs, assistance, and pasture renovation. Many counties have triggered the Livestock Forage Program through the Farm Service Agency when any part of the county registered on the drought monitor as D3. Other programs become available based on county drought designation and if an agricultural disaster is declared.

The assistance offered through the Soil and Water Conservation Districts is mostly in the form of variances to existing practices and were approved at the Soil and Water Districts Commission June 7th meeting. The following information comes from the Executive order 23-05 and is effective until it expires December 1, 2023, unless terminated or extended by subsequent order.

The variances approved apply to districts that reach a minimum of D2 (Severe Drought) status and higher. Once any portion of a county has reached the D2 status, the variances are available throughout the county. The county will remain eligible for the variances until the executive order expires, even if the level of drought is reduced below D2.

The Soil and Water Conservation Districts are offering several drought assistance practices. The first one below is a reinstatement of a practice, and the rest are variances to continual offerings.

DWC-02 Water impoundment Reservoir Cleanout Practice (Ponds)

This practice is only available in D2 or higher drought designated counties. It can only be used for ponds that were constructed with state cost-share. The maximum for the cleanout part of the practice is \$6,000; and fence and water supply components are available as needed, and do not fall under the \$6,000 limit.

Cost-share is authorized for:

- a. Complete removal of sediment in the pool area on DWC-1 Water Impoundment Reservoir that will be utilized for livestock water.
- b. Installation of a limited access point or a permanent siphon pipeline installed around the dam and a tank for livestock watering if a watering facility is not already available on the structure.
- c. Tank only if a water supply line is already installed.
- d. Exclusion fence to protect from livestock if the structure previously was not fenced or the fence has deteriorated to where it will no longer exclude cattle. Grazing is not allowed at any time in the excluded area.
- e. Critical area seeding for the spoil and areas above the normal pool elevation that was disturbed during the cleanout.

Variance to Grazing Practices - Water Development and Distribution, and Grazing School

This variance defers the Grazing School requirement for 12 months after contract payment/or the Water Development (DSP 3.1) and Water Distribution (DSP 3.2) Grazing System practices. The contracts will be for only one watering tank and pipeline and the water source development. The rest of the system can be designed and installed after the landowner has completed an approved grazing school. It is important that producers understand managed grazing prior to designing their systems. A landowner may utilize this variance on two grazing systems that are not contiguous.

A landowner who has already attended a grazing school and needs assistance with water is not limited to one tank.

Variances to Cover Crop Practice - Lifetime Maximum and Haying

This variance allows cover crops to be harvested for livestock feed at termination to provide additional forages and waives the two-production crop rotation requirement for the next planted production crop.

In addition, there is a temporary removal of the N340 Cover Crop Practice maximum for the operators planning to harvest the forage for feed which would allow assistance to anyone who has reached the \$20,000 lifetime maximum. Landowners over the \$20,000 maximum will receive \$30 per acre for any additional acres enrolled.

To exceed the \$20,000 lifetime maximum, the landowner or operator must be intending to harvest the additional acreage in cover crop for livestock feed. Any contracts approved prior to the executive order expiring is eligible for harvest the cover crops for feed any time.

Variance to Livestock Exclusion Requirements

This allows immediate grazing in any of the livestock exclusion areas such as the DFR-5 Woodland Protection Through Livestock Exclusion, DWC-1 Water Impoundment Reservoir, N386 Field Border, N393 Filter Strip, N472 Livestock Exclusion, and WQ10Stream Protection practices. Grazing is allowed provided the area is established in forage that can withstand grazing.

Variance for Reseeding

The variance allows districts to provide assistance to reseed a practice anytime during the maintenance life of the practice in which the grass stand failed due to

the drought of 2022 or 2023. Additionally, if the landowner already received a payment for a reseeding of a practice following the policy, they are eligible for another payment for that practice if the seeding has failed again due to the drought. The variance applies to the following practices.

DSL-01 Permanent Vegetative Cover Establishment;
DSL-02 Permanent Vegetative Cover Improvement;
DSP-02 Permanent Vegetative Cover Enhancement;
DSP-3.5 Grazing System Seed

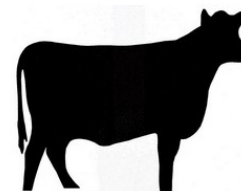
Districts may handle implementation of these practices differently, so contact your local office for more specifics.

Source: *Darla Campbell, ag business / CD specialist*



2023 Fall Calving Show-Me-Select Heifer Sale

The Northeast Missouri Show-Me-Select Replacement heifer program held a fall calving heifer sale where 165 heifers averaged \$2,447. The sale was held on Saturday, June 3rd at F & T Livestock Auction.



Thirteen producers were enrolled in the University of Missouri Extension's educational heifer management program. The heifers were bred to sires with both calving-ease and growth genetics. The top selling lot, consigned by Tyler Haerr brought \$3,000.

Highest consigner average was \$2,920 on five head from Tyler Haerr, Taylor. Other high averaging consignors were E&A Belgian and Cattle Farms, Curryville, \$2,743 on twenty-three head and Beach Cattle Co., Leonard, \$2,605 on ten head.

Twenty-two buyers purchased over \$403,000 worth of bred heifers: exchanging hands in 60 minutes. Calving surveys returned by buyers provide important information that is given back to consignors to guide improvements in future years.

The Show-Me-Select heifer development program takes nearly a year to complete. Pre-breeding exams are completed on heifers usually four to eight weeks before being bred. These exams include a pelvic measurement, reproductive tract score, and weight record. Heifers may be bred artificially or be exposed

to natural service, however; the service sires must meet specific calving ease EPD requirements based on breed. This year 53 head, or 32 percent, of the heifers in the sale were synchronized and bred AI. In this sale, the choice to AI, showed a \$60 price advantage over those bred naturally.

All heifers must be pregnancy tested within 90 days of breeding by a veterinarian to determine expected calving date. The use of ultrasound has helped many of the veterinarians improve their accuracies on calving dates. During the development period the heifers undergo an extensive health program and are vaccinated at weaning, pre-breeding, and pregnancy examination as well as treated several times for internal and external parasites. Heifers are also screened for blemishes, condition, muscling and structural soundness by MU Extension livestock specialists and Missouri Department of Agriculture graders.

This is the 27th year for the Show-Me-Select heifer sale in Palmyra, over 50,000 heifers have been through the program, and 8,139 head have been sold. If you are interested, contact your local MU Extension Livestock Specialist.

Source: *Daniel Mallory, livestock specialist*

deal with insects, diseases, and weeds.

Therefore, raising crops organically requires an increased emphasis on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices, says Keay. “IPM involves thorough planning to prevent the problems that may come, rather than a reactive ‘see and spray’ approach,” he says.

“Adopting and integrating IPM practices into crop production systems is a keystone of successful organic producers. It is a systems approach that involves an understanding of the lifecycle of pests and the farm as an ecosystem, rather than a ‘do-nothing’ approach that some may associate with organic production.” says Keay. Attendees will walk away with a deeper understanding of what is required to successfully produce organic crops.

This series will be via Zoom on Tuesday evenings from 6:30 to 8 p.m. To register for the series use this link <https://extension.missouri.edu/events/organic-production-for-specialty-crops> or call the MU Extension office in Jefferson County at 636-797-5391, by September 24th at noon.

There is a fee, but scholarships are available to Missouri Beginning Farmers to cover a portion of the registration cost. Scholarships can be redeemed at registration. Call Keay at 573-324-5464 for more information.

Source: *Linda Geist, MU Extension Communications*



Webinar Helps Specialty Crop Growers with Organic Production

University of Missouri Extension is offering a nine-part webinar series on organic production of specialty crops.

The series runs Sept. 26 to Nov. 28. The series will begin with an overview of the organic certification process. Other topics include soil and fertility, weed, insect and disease management in organic systems. There also will be individual classes on organic production of tomatoes, leafy greens, and berries.

“MU Extension horticulturists work with many fruit and vegetable growers who have an interest in organic production,” says MU Extension horticulturist Justin Keay. “Some want to work towards USDA Organic Certification, while others are interested in implementing organic practices, but not seeking certification”, says Justin Keay.

Organic growers have fewer effective crop sprays to



Drought Resources

MU Extension has many resources related to drought available on the website

<https://tinyurl.com/MU-drought>

The site has been changing regularly with additional drought meetings, additional articles and resources. The articles below were recently added.

- Things to consider as you feed your way through a drought
- Check with your crop insurance agent before you cut
- Top 5 livestock forage actions to take during a drought

Tim's Take Podcast

The Missouri Agriculture Experiment Station is excited to announce that in November 2022 it launched a YouTube channel and podcast, Tim's Take, which features weekly video stories and a monthly video podcast. <https://www.youtube.com/@MOAES>

Video stories tend to be six minutes or less and feature interviews by Tim Reinbott with faculty, staff, and students on topics of interest that encompass the breadth of CAFNR including horticulture, crop production, natural resources, and livestock production. These stories are aimed toward producers, landowners, and the public. Podcasts are similar with the video portion divided into two-20-30-minute segments. Podcasts and video stories often include subjects that are of urgency such as forage management options due to the drought. If you subscribe to the YouTube channel (it is free!) the latest story of podcast will automatically popup on your browser when you logon to YouTube.

Audio podcasts of Tim's Take in their entirety can be found where you listen to your favorite podcasts: Spotify, Lisbyn, Audible, iHeartRadio, etc.

Source: *Tim Reinbott, Missouri Ag Experiment Stations*



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