



National Association of Conservation Districts

May 16, 2011

Bruce Nelson
Acting Administrator
USDA Farm Service Agency
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-0506

Dear Acting Administrator Nelson:

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) is concerned with the impacts of the recent flooding and drought conditions across the United States. NACD represents 3,000 local conservation districts across the country and in U.S. territories including the Pacific islands. These districts are local units of government, established under state law, and a part of a nationwide delivery system to carry out natural resource management programs at the local level and have 17,000 officials interested in promoting conservation serving on their governing boards. Conservation districts work with private landowners to carry out conservation programs, including the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

Recent extreme weather has caused flooding and drought in approximately a dozen states. Because of the affected grazing acres, some producers in these states are in need of temporary grazing. The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) rules allow for temporary and/or emergency use of CRP while using a conservation management plan. NACD supports a decision to allow the temporary use of CRP lands during this challenging situation.

As a national association, we support FSA's policy of granting emergency grazing and haying of CRP acreage during extreme drought and flooding conditions. We appreciate efforts to provide for local decisions of CRP land use based on proper management plans as well as local environmental conditions.

Sincerely,

Gene Schmidt
President