



Drought and Disaster Resources for Texas Producers

By Justin Duncan and Robert Maggiani, NCAT Agriculture Specialists

Support programs exist to help minimize the negative long-term business impacts that result from lack of water. This publication lists and explains a selection of producer resources available from various agencies at both the state and national levels. Resources are listed in order of relevance.

Federal Programs

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA)

The FSA provides assistance to producers affected by natural-disaster losses resulting from drought, flood, fire, freeze, tornadoes, pest infestation, and other calamities. The 2014 Farm Bill indefinitely extended the following disaster programs, made them retroactive to October 1, 2011, and eliminated the requirement to purchase crop insurance or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage in order to be eligible.

www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=diap&topic=landing

Microloan Program – Offers direct farm-operating loans with a shortened application process and reduced paperwork to meet the needs of smaller, non-traditional, and niche-type operations. The fact sheet *Microloans* is available at www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=fmlp&topic=dflop.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) – Provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when yields fall below a percentage of expected yield, paying an amount (calculated by FSA) of the value of the crop lost at a price determined by FSA. These rates are determined by the Farm Bill. Producers must apply for coverage by the application deadline and pay a service fee. www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/nap_2015_subsqnt_yrs.pdf

Emergency Farm Loans – Provides loans to assist producers with replacing essential property, paying for production costs during a disaster year, and refinancing debt and business/living expenses. Eligibility is limited to producers within counties designated as disaster areas by the USDA Secretary of Agriculture. www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=fmlp&topic=efl



Drought conditions continue to hammer grazing pastures in South Texas. Rancher Willie Utley of Benavides looks out across a drought stricken pasture, which he is resting from grazing livestock. Photo: Beverly Mosely, USDA-NRCS

Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) – Pays out a capped percentage of the producer's lost costs, to help farmers and ranchers repair damage to farmlands caused by natural disasters and put in place methods for water conservation during severe drought. Examples are removing debris from farmland, restoring livestock fences and conservation structures, and grading and shaping damaged farmland. There are various eligibility restrictions, and FSA county committees determine eligibility based on on-site inspections. www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=copr&topic=ecp

Disaster Set-Aside Program – Allows qualifying producers who have existing direct loans with FSA, and who are unable to make scheduled payments, to move up to one full year's payments to the end of the loan. www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/debt_set_aside11.pdf

Emergency Haying and Grazing of Conservation Reserve Program Acreage (CRP) – Allows producers with existing CRP contracts to hay or graze CRP acreage in counties approved for Emergency Haying and Grazing. Producers must receive approval from their county Farm Service Agency office prior to starting haying or grazing, and this must occur outside the Primary Nesting Season of local bird species. www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=copr&topic=crp-eg

Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) – Provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who have suffered grazing losses due to drought or fire. www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/lfp_2014_fbill.pdf

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Funds are available through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and many other programs for conservation practices such as irrigation efficiency, cover crops, rehabilitation of existing spring developments, and protection of grazing lands. To locate an office near you, visit <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=TX>.

USDA Rural Development

Emergency Community Water Assistance Grant (ECWAG) – Enables rural communities that have experienced or are about to experience a significant decline in quantity or quality of drinking water due to an emergency to obtain or maintain adequate quantities of water that meets the standards set by the Safe Drinking Water Act. To locate an office near you, visit <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=TX>

Community Facilities Direct and Guaranteed Loan Program – Provides loans, grants, and loan guarantees for essential community facilities in rural areas and towns of up to 20,000. Loans and price guarantees are available to public entities such as municipalities, counties, boroughs, and special-purpose districts, as well as to nonprofit corporations and tribal governments. www.rurdev.usda.gov/hcf_cf.html

USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA)

Crop Insurance Programs – Offer a wide variety of yield- and revenue-based insurance products. These policies, which are sold and serviced by private insurance companies, vary across commodities and counties in Texas and cover many natural causes of loss. A fact sheet on Texas crop and livestock insurance products can be found at www.rma.usda.gov/pubs/2014/stateprofiles/texas13.pdf.

Texas Assistance Programs

Texas Department Agriculture (TDA) Drought Resources

Contains links to numerous resources such as the Drought Monitor, state reservoir levels, watering restriction maps, and others. <https://texasagriculture.gov/Home/ProductionAgriculture/TheWaterSource/DroughtResources.aspx>

Texas Water Resources Institute

Provides links to drought resources, including maps of the effects of the drought on surface water, county burn bans, the Texas Water Development Board, and others. <http://twri.tamu.edu/resources/drought/>

Texas A&M University Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN)

Offers a compilation of drought websites. <http://texashelp.tamu.edu/004-natural/droughts.php>

Texas State Drought Preparedness Council

Provides monthly Texas-wide situation reports on the drought and the Drought Annex to the State of Texas Emergency Management Plan. www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem/CouncilsCommittees/droughtCouncil/stateDroughtPrep-Council.htm

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Furnishes drought resources, presentations, and text messaging information. <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/response/drought/index.html/#respond>

Hay Exchanges

Connects those needing hay with those who have hay to sell. www.hayexchange.com
www.gotexan.org/HayhotlineHome.aspx

Texas Natural Resources Library

Distributes the publication *Plant Poisonings in Livestock*, which indicates that as foraging resources become scarce, it becomes more likely that livestock will ingest toxic plants in their search for nutrition. <http://texnat.tamu.edu/library/publications/reducing-livestock-losses-to-toxic-plants>

Texas Comptroller

Offers tax relief. www.texasahead.org/tax_programs/disaster_relief/index.php

ATTRA Drought-Related PowerPoint Presentations

Available at https://attra.ncat.org/water_quality.html

Drought Introduction

Provides an introduction to droughts and their impacts on soils, crops, and animals, with an overview of management practices to lessen the impacts of drought.

Soil Health and Drought

Focuses on soil management and tillage practices to conserve water and maintain conditions for productive crop and forage growth during droughts.

Pasture Health and Drought Protection

Focuses on rotational grazing practices and forage management to protect pasture resources prior to, during, and following a drought.

Irrigation

Discusses sustainable irrigation practices and methods for protecting soil and water quality when using irrigation.

Pasture and Rangeland Management During Drought

Describes supplement feeding practices, toxic plants, toxic syndromes associated with drought, animal management and selective culling to reduce stress on land resources.

Water, Heat Stress, and Drought

Focuses on animal water needs; water-quality concerns; relationships between water quality, feed quality, and water consumption; and factors affecting heat stress and practices for minimizing it.

ATTRA Publications

Free and low-cost publications are available online at <https://attra.ncat.org/publication.html>

Conserving Irrigation Water

Energy Saving Tips for Irrigators (IP278), 16 pages

Maintaining Irrigation Pumps, Motors, and Engines (IP299), 16 pages

Measuring and Conserving Irrigation Water (IP280), 12 pages

Soil Moisture Monitoring: Low-Cost Tools and Methods (IP277), 12 pages

Protecting Water Quality on Organic Farms (IP214), 36 pages

Building Drought Resilient Soils

Conservation Tillage (CT105), 37 pages



Pastures stricken by drought and flooding continue to recover on the ranch of Jose Ramirez III and Jose Ramirez Jr. Photo: Beverly Mosely, USDA-NRCS

Drought Resistant Soil (IP169), 7 pages

El Manejo Sostenible del Suelo (Sustainable Soil Management, Spanish version, SP027), 40 pages

Overview of Cover Crops and Green Manures (IP024), 16 pages

Organic Matters Series: Pursuing Conservation Tillage Systems for Organic Crop Production (IP183), 28 pages

Sustainable Soil Management (IP027), 31 pages

Drought-Resilient Grazing Practices

Converting Cropland to Perennial Grassland (IP244), 12 pages

Managed Grazing in Riparian Areas (IP223), 28 pages

No-Till Case Study, Miller Farm: Restoring Grazing Land with Cover Crops (IP444), 8 pages

No-Till Case Study, Richter Farm: Cover Crop Cocktails in a Forage-Based System (IP437), 8 pages

Protecting Riparian Areas: Farmland Management Strategies (IP186), 36 pages

Guides to Federal Resources

Federal Conservation Resources for Sustainable Farming and Ranching (IP294), 20 pages

Crop Insurance Options for Specialty, Diversified, and Organic Farmers (IP 438), 20 pages

Other National Drought Resources

Farm Aid, Disaster Assistance for Farmers
www.farmaid.org/crisissupport

Contains a wide assortment of very useful links ranging from information on disaster support to legal considerations.

Farmers' Legal Action Group
www.flaginc.org/topic/disaster-assistance-and-risk-management

Provides the Farmers' Guide to Disaster Assistance and recordkeeping templates.

National Drought Mitigation Center and Monitor
<http://drought.unl.edu>
<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>

Provides current drought condition maps.

Climate Prediction Center Drought Assessment
www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/Drought
Issues drought forecasting maps.

Brad Lancaster's HarvestingRainwater.com
www.harvestingrainwater.com/rainwater-harvesting-inforesources
Offers a comprehensive guide on rainwater harvesting methods.

ReadyAG Workbook: Disaster and Defense Preparedness for Production Agriculture
<http://extension.psu.edu/prepare/readyag>
Helps a producer identify vulnerable areas of production and management, prioritize areas to strengthen, create a specific action plan, develop an accurate inventory of assets, identify and engage local critical services, and find additional help.

Plants Poisonous to Livestock in the Western States
www.ars.usda.gov/is/np/PoisonousPlants/PoisonousPlants.pdf
Details poisonous plants identified by USDA Agricultural Research Service.



Grazing pastures in Texas stricken by drought and flooding. Photo: Beverly Mosely, USDA-NRCS

ATTRA - National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service

- Friendly staff, knowledgeable about livestock, horticulture, agronomy, organic farming, marketing, farm energy, and other sustainable agriculture topics.
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1-800-346-9140 (English)

1-800-411-3222 (Español)

P.O. Box 3838 • Butte, MT 59702