

What's Up, Doc?

**Grayson County Ag and Natural Resources
Newsletter**

Vol 1: Issue 1 (June 2022) by D. Chad Cummings



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Introduction to Grayson County - D. Chad Cummings, PhD

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Chad completed his collegiate education with degrees in Crop Production (B.S.), Forage Weed Science (M.S.), and Conservation Science – Invasive Species Ecology/Fire Ecology (Ph.D.) at Oklahoma State University. He graduated from OSU in 2007 and accepted a position with Dow AgroSciences LLC (now Corteva Agriscience) as an Integrated Field Scientist in the southern region (covering AR, LA, MS, NM, OK, and TX). Chad worked in research and development for 14 years with Cereals, Range and Pasture, Industrial Vegetation Management, and Forestry agricultural chemical products in the region, cooperating with university researchers and assisting sales personnel in these markets.



Chad started as the Grayson County Extension Agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) in April 2022. Chad's passion for agriculture, wildlife habitat restoration, and pollinator habitat conservation is what brought him to the Extension Service, and he hopes to guide north Texans in their agricultural endeavors.

Within his career as a professional weed scientist, Chad has made over 70 major presentations at regional and national agricultural meetings, completed 8 peer-reviewed publications, and presented numerous Corteva Agriscience and industry-wide training presentations. Chad currently serves as the Constitution, Bylaws, and Op Guide Advisor to the Western Society of Weed Science (WSWS) Board of Directors. He also served with both WSWS and the Society of Range Management (SRM), ensuring continuity between weed science and range management objectives, goals, and product stewardship. Chad served as Chair of the SRM Rangeland Invasive Species Committee (RISC) in 2011 and again in 2021. Chad also serves as an inter-societal committee chair for the WSWS Ad Hoc Invasive Species Committee, bridging the gap among western societies, government agencies, and academia by co-leading a 13-member team of invasive species professionals.

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Grayson County USDA Crop Report Submissions (May Summaries)

9 May 2022

Overall, we are in good shape on soil moisture. Some areas received another 0.5 to over 1 inch of rain last week. Growing conditions are excellent, with a general warming trend beginning to strengthen. Wheat is at soft dough stage for most soft and hard red varieties. Some stripped and leaf rust has been reported but the resistant varieties of wheat are still in good shape. Summer pasture grasses are beginning to take off, seeing all green up and some stolon lengthening on the bermudagrass. Warm-season weeds are up, and many are 6-10 inches tall - still all vegetative growth. Cool-season grasses and weeds are all headed out and most are post flower production and into grain/seed pod fill stage.

Trees overall are complete with flower production and into full leaf development. Honey mesquite is in full leaf production, with some plants beginning to flower (bud break in most areas of the county were in the first week of April). By mid to late May, we should be set up for great brush control conditions. Row crops are looking good across the county.

The east side saw significant rainfall and some crop fields were under water briefly, resulting in some stunting, but minimal crop destruction. Insect pests in all crops are on the rise, including aphids, stinkbugs, and some worms (web in particular). By D. Chad Cummings

31 May 2022

Corn is looking great across the county. Early planted corn is tasseling, late planted corn is at V8 or beyond. No real insect or disease pressure widespread at this time. Wheat is very near harvest across the area and looking very good, most overcame early drought conditions.

First crop hay harvest (bermudagrass, ryegrass, bahiagrass, oats) was cut and rolled without issue this year, first harvest this early in some years - especially without a complicating rainfall event. Soybeans, and cotton look very good.

Cattle are in good to excellent condition. Horn and stable flies are increasing significantly, and horseflies and deerflies have begun their adult stages. Spring calves appear to be gaining well. Grass condition in grazed pastures is still in great condition, although summer weeds (specifically ragweed and goatweed) are growing rapidly. Goats have begun kidding across the area, and most kids are doing very well.

High fertilizer prices are causing many hay and forage producers to eliminate or greatly reduce fertilizer inputs for the spring 2022 grass crops, which will likely drop yields and days of grazing significantly. Warm summer temps, coupled with dry SW wind are beginning to dry the topsoil out significantly. Rain is forecasted for the area in the next 7 days. By D. Chad Cummings



In the News.....

Registration opens for Texas A&M Beef Cattle Short Course

Internationally recognized event set Aug. 1-3 in College Station

MAY 23, 2022

It's time for beef cattle producers from all over the world to begin making plans to attend the 68th annual [Texas A&M Beef Cattle Short Course](#), the largest event of its kind in the nation, scheduled for Aug. 1-3 on the Texas A&M University campus.



Cattle producers from throughout the U.S. and several other countries attend the annual Texas A&M Beef Cattle Short Course. (Texas A&M AgriLife photo by Laura McKenzie)

The event is hosted by [Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service](#) and the [College of Agriculture and Life Sciences' Department of Animal Science](#) at Texas A&M. From the Texas Aggie Prime Rib Dinner to

the Cattleman's College, the nationally and internationally recognized three-day event annually attracts over 2,000 participants.

"High input prices and ranchers' response to them will be a major theme of this year's conference," said Jason Cleere, Ph.D., conference coordinator and AgriLife Extension beef cattle specialist in the Department of Animal Science.

Both in-person and online attendance is being offered. Cost is \$240 for in-person attendance and \$160 for online if registered by July 27. A \$40 late registration fee will be charged after that date. To register, go to tx.ag/BCSC22Reg or call 979-845-6931 for more information.

Something for everyone

The program is expected to offer a full agenda for everyone, from the novice livestock operator to the seasoned professional, Cleere said.

"Ranchers are facing some really tough times now due to a lingering drought across most of the state, coupled with input costs that are nearly double what they were a year ago," he said. "Many of our sessions will be addressing these issues. One of our forage sessions will discuss grazing management in response to drought and high fertilizer prices along with how to move forward economically with high seed prices (winter pasture), hay prices, high fuel prices, etc."

The Cattleman's College will feature more than 20 concurrent sessions, with topics including animal health, nutrition, reproduction, breeding, genetics, selection, research, marketing and handling. The management sessions will cover business, forage, range and purebred cattle, and speakers will also address landowner issues and fence building.

At least nine pesticide continuing education units and 14 veterinarian continuing education credits are available to attendees.

Additionally, over 150 agriculture-related businesses and trade show exhibitors are expected to attend the course.

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Why are my tomato leaves curling?

Environmental, chemical or biological changes could be to blame for a curling tomato leaf

MAY 5, 2022



As the weather warms up and everything in the garden begins to grow, some gardeners may notice their tomato plants have twisting or curling leaves.

At the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center in Overton, irrigated tomato leaves curl from heat stress in the mid-day sun. (Texas A&M AgriLife photo by Adam Russell)

Although the [yellowing of tomato leaves](#) is one problem, the curling of tomato plant leaves is often quite another.

According to Joe Masabni, Ph.D., [Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service](#) vegetable specialist from the [Department of Horticultural Sciences](#), based in Dallas, the leaves of the tomato plant may be curling due to many reasons, but environmental, chemical or biological changes are typically to blame.

Specifically, when Masabni sees a curling tomato leaf, he checks for mites, viruses and herbicide drift as well as one of the latest challenges — herbicide residue in compost. However, curled leaves can also be caused by other issues, including weather and water.

Broad mites and viruses in tomatoes

Although [broad mites](#) are so small that you need a microscope to identify them, they can do significant damage. The mites attack a variety of vegetable plants and flowers and prefer to feed on young leaves and flowers. The toxins they inject into the leaves make them distort and curl.

Tomato plants also can be affected by hundreds of viruses, but the most common one associated with yellow and curling leaves is the [tomato yellow leaf curl virus](#). This virus is spread by the sweet potato or silverleaf whitefly, which can be managed through insecticide oils and soaps.

For identification and assessments, the [Texas Plant Disease Diagnostic Laboratory](#) can help based on a sample sent in from the leaves of the plant.

Herbicide drift with tomato plants

"Tomatoes are especially sensitive to herbicide sprays or herbicide drift," said Muthukumar Bagavathiannan, Ph.D., a [Texas A&M AgriLife Research](#) weed scientist, associate professor in the [Department of Soil and Crop Sciences](#) and [Chancellor's EDGES Fellow'21](#).

Crops and pastures are often treated with herbicides for controlling weeds, and the movement of liquid particles from herbicide, called drift, can severely damage nearby tomato plants.

"Physical herbicide drifts are often limited to few yards," Bagavathiannan said. "However, vapor drifts that can occur with certain herbicides and environmental conditions can travel for miles. While minor damage may not kill the plant, the damage may result in curled leaves and likely reduced fruit yields."

Wind speeds as low as 5 mph can result in considerable herbicide drift that can be damaging to tomatoes, especially when applied nearby. Though commercial applications of herbicides over large acreage are usually associated with herbicide drift, weed killers for lawns and landscapes often contain growth regulator herbicides such as 2,4-D and dicamba to which tomatoes are highly sensitive. These should be used with caution.

Applicators must carefully follow the herbicide label for appropriate use considerations for reducing drift, Bagavathiannan said.

Herbicide residue lingering in soil

Masabni said the most common and biggest challenge he has seen in the last few years is unexpected herbicide residue in compost, which can remain in the soil for an extended period, unless treated or removed.

"In Texas, we have a lot of cattle and horses, and people are taking advantage of manure that they are getting, because it is free fertilizer," Masabni said. "What they don't know is that even if the manure has been drying out in the sun for five years and the animal consumed straw from fields treated with the herbicide aminopyralid, that herbicide is still active in the manure. It does not break down. Even through composting, the herbicide residue will survive the heat of the composting."

This problem is not just temporary, once it is in the garden, it is in the garden for a long time, he explained. For gardeners utilizing raised beds, the solution is to get rid of the old soil and replace with new soil not tainted with the herbicide residue.

For gardeners working on their own land that has been exposed to herbicides in the soil or the amendments, adding activated charcoal, or biochar, can be an effective solution, but these products can be expensive, Bagavathiannan said. In studies led by the Department of Soil and Crop Sciences in Bryan-College Station, [application of activated charcoal](#) greatly reduced injury to tomato and other vegetables by a number of pasture herbicides.

Checklist to consider when assessing tomato leaf curl:

- Did you add composted manure or raw manure from a cow or horse? Chicken litter is not a problem. If yes, then herbicide residue may be the most likely cause. If no, next possibility is mites.
- Broad mites cannot be seen with the naked eye or a magnifying lens. You will need a microscope to confirm their presence or send a sample to the Texas A&M Plant Disease Diagnostic Lab.
- If the leaf curl is caused by mites, the best solution is to spray a miticide. Then new growth will be normal, and plants will be fine. However, the damaged leaves will remain damaged and should be removed. Spray at least two times about one week apart.
- If the new growth continues to show curling or twisting, then the cause is herbicide residue in the soil or compost. In this case, remove tainted soil or add activated charcoal.

For more in-depth information on assessing curled leaves on tomato plants, view the free AgriLife publication "[What makes tomato leaves twist or curl](#)" that provides even more detailed information on assessment and solutions for this tomato challenge.

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Texas A&M AgriLife tick research gets \$1 million boost

Federal grant seeks novel acaricide, vaccine in fight against cattle fever tick

APRIL 20, 2022

Two projects by [Texas A&M AgriLife Research](#) scientists aim to protect the U.S. cattle industry from the emerging threat of pesticide-resistant cattle fever ticks.



Cattle fever tick populations with resistance to acaricides are a growing concern within the Texas cattle industry. (Texas A&M AgriLife photo)

[Adela Chavez](#), Ph.D., AgriLife Research entomologist and assistant professor, and [Patricia Pietrantonio](#), Ph.D., an AgriLife Research Fellow and professor, both in the [Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Department of Entomology](#), each

received a [U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture](#) grant directed at creating new ways to prevent tick infestations and protect Texas cattle from the diseases spread by cattle fever ticks.

Cattle fever ticks represent one of the greatest threats to the U.S. cattle industry. The ticks carry parasites and bacteria that cause deadly diseases, including bovine babesiosis and anaplasmosis. A few treatments but no effective vaccines exist for these diseases.

The Texas cattle industry urgently needs new technologies to combat these ticks, and the grant-funded research at AgriLife Research responds to the needs of the industry, said Phillip Kaufman, Ph.D., head of the Department of Entomology.

Pietrantonio received \$625,000 for a three-year study to identify synthetic molecules that can be developed into treatments that kill cattle fever ticks but are nontoxic for livestock or humans. Chavez received \$530,405 for a two-year study focused on creating vaccines for cattle.

"These studies have enormous implications not only for the cattle industry, but also for our overall biological understanding of ticks," Kaufman said. "Novel research like this is challenging, but it is vitally important for the future of animal and human health."

Cattle fever ticks threat reemerging

Ticks and tick-borne diseases significantly affect livestock globally. Tick feeding can reduce milk production and weight gain, damage hides, and cause anemia or even death.

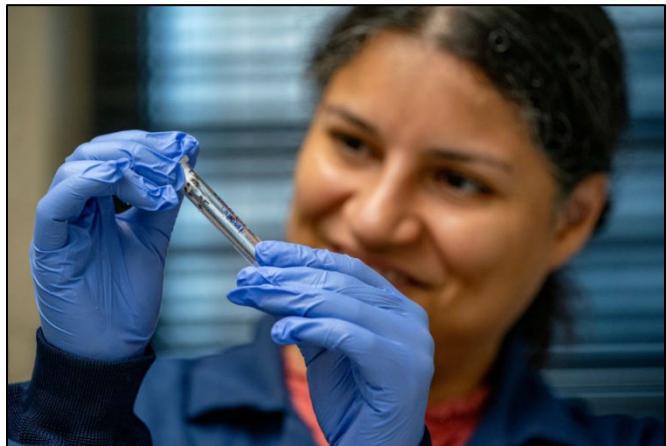
Beef cattle and calf sales are Texas' No. 1 agricultural commodity and generate about \$8.5 billion annually. Worldwide, ticks cause an estimated \$18.7 billion in economic losses each year.

Cattle fever tick eradication efforts began in 1906 and were officially eradicated in the U.S. in the early 1940s. But cattle fever ticks are still common in Mexico. They are an increasing threat to cattle producers because they are developing resistance to acaricides, the primary method to control them.

Ticks with resistance to permethrin, an acaricide not used against cattle fever tick in Texas but used widely in Mexico, has been found in Texas, despite tick quarantine efforts. However, the ticks have been shown to be resistant to many other acaricides outside the U.S., raising the threat to the cattle industry. Cattle fever ticks also infest wildlife, such as white-tailed deer and other exotic animals, including nilgai antelopes present in South Texas.

The movement of animals carrying ticks across the U.S.-Mexico border is a constant menace, as cattle ticks could become established and possibly transmit disease-causing pathogens to cattle herds. Tick resistance to acaricides makes it imperative to develop both anti-tick vaccines and new anti-tick treatments that are safe for vertebrate animals.

Vaccines to protect cattle



Adela Chavez, Ph.D., is expanding her tick research to seek a vaccine to treat cattle infected by cattle fever ticks. (Texas A&M AgriLife photo by Laura McKenzie)

Although some vaccines have shown partial protection, Chavez said genetic differences between tick populations reduce the vaccines' efficiency. Her project will examine the potential use of substances from tick salivary glands and midguts as vaccine candidates.

Specifically, the study will focus on small particles, called extracellular vesicles, in the salivary glands and midguts of ticks. The team will examine the extracellular vesicles for proteins that cause immune responses in cattle and deer.

The team will conduct these studies on two very different tick species, the cattle fever tick and the lone star tick. Proteins that cause immune responses will then be used to generate artificial vesicles that can be mass-produced and commercialized to create a vaccine protective against different tick species.

Effective tick vaccines will decrease the impact of ticks and tick-borne disease on cattle, Chavez said. She added that the study could also provide information applicable to other delivery systems, potentially impacting both animal and human health.

"We're creating something new," Chavez said. "Everything we are doing is experimental – extracting the molecules, identifying the proteins in ticks to exploit, and creating artificial vesicles to then produce a vaccine to validate. It is exciting to think about the potential, but there is much work to be done."

This project also involves Tammi Johnson, Ph.D., assistant professor of wildlife disease ecology in Texas A&M's [Department of Rangeland, Wildlife and Fisheries Management](#), and Don Thomas with the USDA-[Agricultural Research Service](#).

Acaricides to disrupt ticks

As cattle fever ticks blood-feed on host animals, they transmit bacteria and parasites in their saliva. Pietrantonio said her project focuses on producing chemical molecules that selectively disrupt ticks' ability to bite and feed.

This multidisciplinary project will evaluate small molecules discovered in Pietrantonio's lab that act against a tick-specific protein and are not toxic to vertebrate cells. Researchers will also investigate tick physiology to identify tick hormone receptors that could be interfered with by small synthetic molecules that will be deadly, but only to ticks.

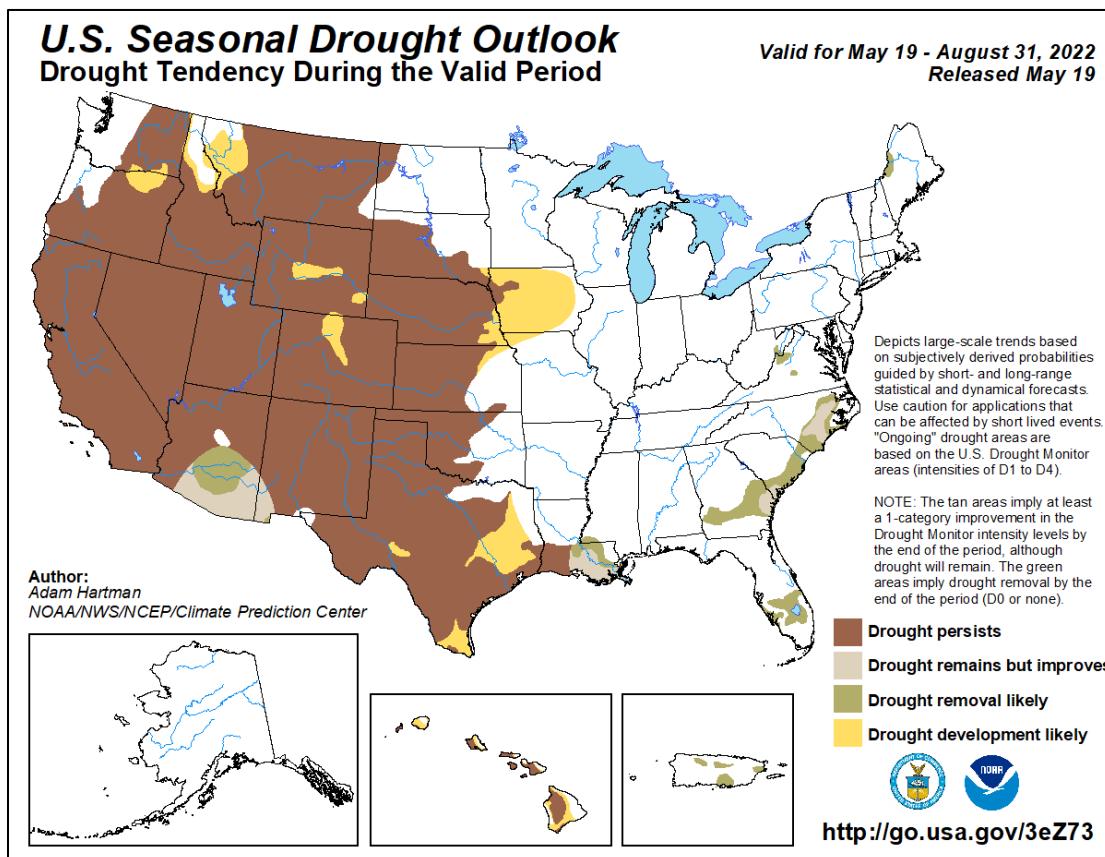
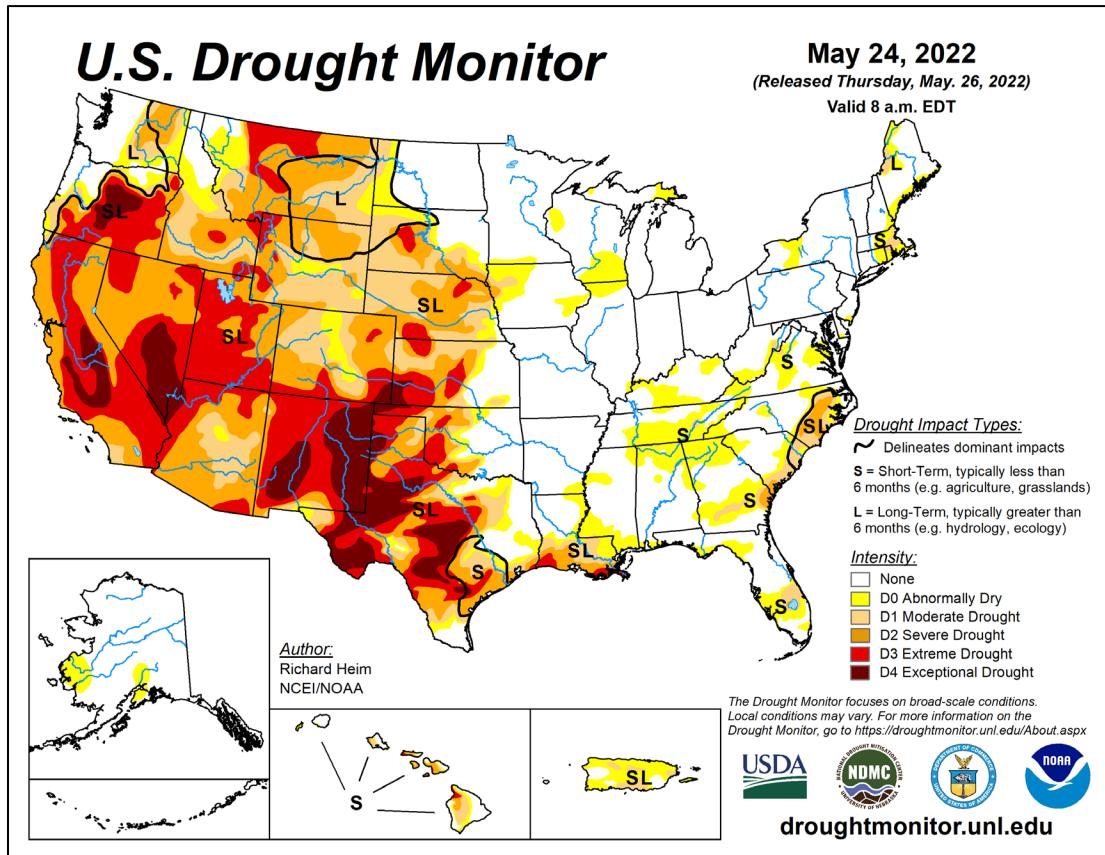
Pietrantonio's team will screen thousands of synthetic molecules using state-of-the-art technologies to identify molecules that may be deadly to ticks. The project will produce new molecular knowledge of tick physiology and endocrinology with the goal of killing ticks or reducing the number of eggs the females produce, which in turn will decrease population size.

In addition to Pietrantonio, the project includes three USDA-Agricultural Research Service collaborators working on cattle ticks: Perot Saelao, Ph.D., Kevin Temeyer, Ph.D., and Don Thomas, Ph.D. The team also includes Dwight Baker, Ph.D., senior research scientist in the [laboratory of James Sacchettini](#), Ph.D., in the Texas A&M [Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics](#). The team members have complementary expertise in tick toxicology, physiology, genomics and chemistry.

"There is so much we do not know about ticks or their physiological and biological processes at the molecular level," Pietrantonio said. "These are long-haul experiments to identify genes and receptors and critical tick processes we can disrupt and novel molecules that we can use safely."

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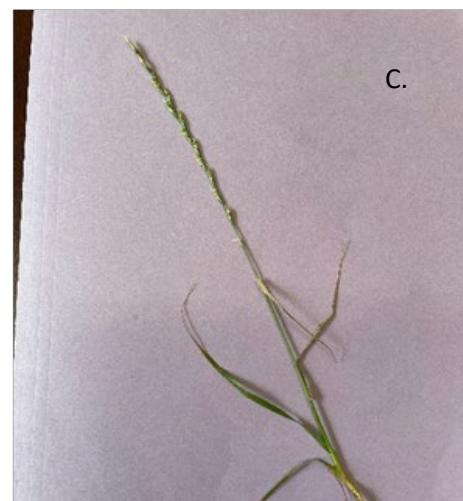
US Drought Monitor and 3-Month Climate Prediction (Late May 2022)



Plants, Insects, and Diseases Active Now in GC:

Plants

Cool season plants like ryegrass, bromes, little barley, wheat, mustards, dock, are on the way out the door for this year. Warm season weeds like crabgrass, foxtail, woolly croton (doveweed), ragweed, johnsongrass, and pigweed are picking up momentum in the warm, wet late spring the region has had. In many cases Johnsongrass is putting on a seedhead in the bar-ditches and in some fields. Nightshades like silverleaf nightshade, buffalobur, ground cherry, and Horsenettle are mainly in vegetative stage although some silverleaf nightshade has begun to flower. Foxtails, dallisgrass, and crabgrass are really growing rapidly now.



A) Brome species (*Bromus* spp.), a cool-season annual grass that germinates in the fall. B) Foxtail species (*Setaria* spp.), a warm-season annual grass that germinates in late winter and spring. C) Italian ryegrass (*Lolium multiflorum*), a cool-season annual forage grass that germinates in the fall. All plants were collected and photos taken on 25.May.2022 (DCC).

Insects

Aphids in winter wheat began to flush toward the end of the season, meaning they will likely be searching for a new host soon. The noctuid moth population has been steady this spring, but no major worm outbreaks yet. With all the recent rains, fire ants are active, and many mounds are starting to pop up in areas – active foraging is occurring so now is a good time to treat for fire ants (<https://fireant.tamu.edu/>).

Diseases

Most plant diseases are slow right now, with the cool weather, but with the recent heavy rains be vigilant to watch out for additional disease development in crops, gardens, and ornamentals as the temperatures warm back up. Some leaf rust started in the late susceptible wheat varieties, but minimal impacts have been observed. Remember cultural management and preventative treatments are very important for disease problems. Corn crops will likely get the aflatoxin prevention treatments soon in most of the county in anticipation of tasseling.

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News from USDA - Farm Services Agency

USDA to Provide Payments to Livestock Producers Impacted by Drought or Wildfire

New Emergency Livestock Relief benefits to be delivered through two-phased approach; compensation for 2021 forage losses

Release & Contact Info

Press Release

Release No. 0070.22

Contact: FPAC-BC Press
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WASHINGTON, March 31, 2022 – The U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced that ranchers who have approved applications through the 2021 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) for forage losses due to severe drought or wildfire in 2021 will soon begin receiving emergency relief payments for increases in supplemental feed costs in 2021 through the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) new [Emergency Livestock Relief Program \(ELRP\)](#).

"Producers of grazing livestock experienced catastrophic losses of available forage as well as higher costs for supplemental feed in 2021. Unfortunately, the conditions driving these losses have not improved for many and have even worsened for some, as drought spreads across the U.S.," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "In order to deliver much-needed assistance as efficiently as

possible, phase one of the ELRP will use certain data from the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), allowing USDA to distribute payments within days to livestock producers."

Background

On September 30, 2021, President Biden signed into law the *Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act* (P.L. 117-43). This Act includes \$10 billion in assistance to agricultural producers impacted by wildfires, droughts, hurricanes, winter storms and other eligible disasters experienced during calendar years 2020 and 2021. Additionally, the Act specifically targets \$750 million to provide assistance to livestock producers for losses incurred due to drought or wildfires in calendar year 2021. ELRP is part of FSA's implementation of the Act.

For impacted ranchers, USDA will leverage LFP data to deliver immediate relief for increases in supplemental feed costs in 2021. LFP is an important tool that provides up to 60% of the estimated replacement feed cost when an eligible drought adversely impacts grazing lands or 50% of the monthly feed cost for the number of days the producer is prohibited from grazing the managed rangeland because of a qualifying wildfire.

FSA received more than 100,000 applications totaling nearly \$670 million in payments to livestock producers under LFP for the 2021 program year.

Congress recognized requests for assistance beyond this existing program and provided specific funding for disaster-impacted livestock producers in 2021.

ELRP Eligibility – Phase One

To be eligible for an ELRP payment under phase one of program delivery, livestock producers must have suffered grazing losses in a county rated by the U.S. Drought Monitor as having a D2 (severe drought) for eight consecutive weeks or a D3 (extreme drought) or higher level of drought intensity during the 2021 calendar year, and have applied and been approved for 2021 LFP. Additionally, producers whose permitted grazing on federally managed lands was disallowed due to wildfire are also eligible for ELRP payments, if they applied and were approved for 2021 LFP.

As part of FSA's efforts to streamline and simplify the delivery of ELRP phase one benefits, producers are not required to submit an application for payment; however, they must have the following forms on file with FSA within a subsequently announced deadline as determined by the Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs:

- CCC-853, *Livestock Forage Disaster Program Application*
- Form AD-2047, *Customer Data Worksheet*.
- Form CCC-902, *Farm Operating Plan* for an individual or legal entity.
- Form CCC-901, *Member Information for Legal Entities* (if applicable).
- Form FSA-510, *Request for an Exception to the \$125,000 Payment Limitation for Certain Programs* (if applicable).
- Form CCC-860, *Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification*, if applicable, for the 2021 program year.

- A highly erodible land conservation (sometimes referred to as HELC) and wetland conservation certification (Form AD-1026 *Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification*) for the ELRP producer and applicable affiliates.

ELRP Payment Calculation – Phase One

To further expedite payments to eligible livestock producers, determine eligibility, and calculate an ELRP phase one payment, FSA will utilize livestock inventories and drought-affected forage acreage or restricted animal units and grazing days due to wildfire already reported by the producer when they submitted a 2021 CCC-853, *Livestock Forage Disaster Program Application* form.

Phase one ELRP payments will be equal to the eligible livestock producer's gross 2021 LFP calculated payment multiplied by a payment percentage, to reach a reasonable approximation of increased supplemental feed costs for eligible livestock producers in 2021.

The ELRP payment percentage will be 90% for historically underserved producers, including beginning, limited resource, and veteran farmers and ranchers, and 75% for all other producers. These payments will be subject to a payment limitation.

To qualify for the higher payment percentage, eligible producers must have a CCC-860, *Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification*, form on file with FSA for the 2021 program year.

Payments to eligible producers through phase one of ELRP are estimated to total more than \$577 million.

ELRP - Phase Two

Today's announcement is only Phase One of relief for livestock producers. FSA continues to evaluate and identify impacts of 2021 drought and wildfire on livestock producers to ensure equitable and inclusive distribution of much-needed emergency relief program benefits.

Emergency Relief Program (ERP) Assistance for Crop Producers

FSA is developing a two-phased process to provide assistance to diversified, row crop and specialty crop operations that were impacted by an eligible natural disaster event in calendar years 2020 or 2021.

This program will provide assistance to crop producers and will follow a two-phased process similar to that of the livestock assistance with implementation of the first phase in the coming weeks. Phase one of the crop assistance program delivery will leverage existing [Federal Crop Insurance](#) or [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](#) data as the basis for calculating initial payments.

Making the initial payments using existing safety net and risk management data will both speed implementation and further encourage participation in these permanent programs, including the Pasture, Rangeland, Forage Rainfall Index Crop Insurance Program, as Congress intended.

The second phase of the crop program will be intended to fill additional assistance gaps and cover eligible producers who did not participate in existing risk management programs.

Through proactive communication and outreach, USDA will keep producers and stakeholders informed as ERP implementation details are made available.

Additional Livestock Drought Assistance

Due to the persistent drought conditions in the Great Plains and West, FSA will be offering additional relief through the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-raised Fish Program \(ELAP\)](#) (PDF, 783 KB) to help ranchers cover above normal costs of hauling livestock to forage. This policy enhancement complements previously announced ELAP compensation for hauling feed to livestock. Soon after FSA announced the assistance for hauling feed to livestock, stakeholders were quick to point out that producers also were hauling the livestock to the feed source as well and encouraged this additional flexibility.

It is important to note that, unlike ELP emergency relief benefits which are only applicable for eligible losses incurred in the 2021 calendar year, this ELAP livestock and feed hauling compensation will not only be retroactive for 2021 but will also be available for losses in 2022 and subsequent years.

To calculate ELAP program benefits, an [online tool](#) is currently available to help producers document and estimate payments to cover feed transportation cost increases caused by drought and will soon be updated to assist producers with calculations associated with drought related costs incurred for hauling livestock to forage.

More Information

Additional USDA disaster assistance information can be found on farmers.gov, including USDA resources specifically for producer impacted by [drought](#) and [wildfire](#) and the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#) (PDF, 1.5 MB), and [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#). For FSA and Natural Resources Conservation Service programs, producers should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#). For assistance with a crop insurance claim, producers and landowners should contact their [crop insurance agent](#).

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit [usda.gov](#).

Events Coming Up

Jun 14-15

- 4-H Horse Show (District IV-*McKinney*)

Jun 27-28

- 4-H & FFA Steer Validation (*Whitewright*)

Jun 27-29

- 4-H Horsemanship Camp (*Denison*)

Jul 08

- Cow-Calf Handling and Forage Field Day (Joint with Fannin County-*Savoy*)

Aug 1-3

- Beef Cattle Short Course (*College Station*)

Aug 26

- Ag & Nat Resources & GCAD Ag Appraiser Seminar/Workshop (*Location TBD*)

Visit our website at [Welcome to Grayson County - Grayson \(agrilife.org\)](http://Welcome to Grayson County - Grayson (agrilife.org)) to sign up for the events.

One of our landowners, working with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension team to improve their land by soil testing, planning a weed control strategy, and looking at ways to develop a complete ranch management plan to maximize sustainable forage and cattle production in south Grayson County, TX.



Photo courtesy of Brad Kooiman, Pilot Point/Tioga, TX