



United States Department of Agriculture

**Farm Service Agency**

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# News Release

## **Drought Prompts Federal Assistance for Farmers and Ranchers in Stevens County**

Colville WA, (August 5, 2015) – Ranchers in Stevens County may be eligible for financial drought relief from the federal government after the U.S. Drought Monitor reached D2, or a severe drought, for eight consecutive weeks.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency will make Livestock Forage Program payments to eligible ranchers in Stevens County after severe drought coincided with the normal grazing season. One monthly payment can be as high as \$40.79 for an adult cow. This is in addition to the emergency loans we have available for agricultural producers in this and adjacent counties because of a Disaster Designation due to drought."

For drought, LFP payments are equal to 60 percent of the monthly feed cost. Program payments help offset higher costs of purchasing feed or forage. Currently, ranchers in Stevens County are eligible for one month of financial assistance. "This could increase if the drought continues," said Reitmeier. Applications are due to the Farm Service Agency by January 31, 2016.

Emergency loans are also available in Stevens County and contiguous counties. The loans are low interest, currently 3.625% percent, with payment terms of up to 40 years. They may be used to restore or replace essential property, pay all or part of production costs associated with the disaster year, pay essential family living expenses, reorganize a farming operation or refinance certain debts.

Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the designation to apply for emergency loans to help cover part of their actual losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. FSA has a variety of programs, in addition to the Emergency Loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity.

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Additional programs that may be available to assist farmers and ranchers include the Emergency Conservation Program, the Livestock Indemnity Program, the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program, and the Tree Assistance Program. Interested farmers may contact their local USDA Farm Service Agency office for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs. Additional information is available online at <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>.

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