Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director, Dan Steinkruger, announced that an additional 47 counties have been designated as primary natural disaster areas due to the ongoing drought affecting Nebraska.

Those counties are: Antelope, Arthur, Banner, Blaine, Box Butte, Brown ,Buffalo, Cedar, Chase, Cherry, Cheyenne, Dawes, Dawson, Deuel, Dixon, Franklin, Garden, Garfield, Gosper, Grant, Hall, Harlan, Holt, Hooker, Kearney, Keith, Keya Paha, Kimball, Knox, Lincoln, Logan, Loup, McPherson, Madison, Morrill, Perkins, Phelps, Pierce, Platte, Rock, Scotts Bluff, Sheridan, Sioux, Stanton, Thomas, Wayne, Wheeler

This brings the total number of Nebraska counties with a primary designation to 61. In addition, the following 23 contiguous counties also become eligible for disaster programs:

Adams, Boone, Boyd, Butler, Clay, Colfax, Cuming, Custer, Dakota, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Greeley, Hamilton, Hayes, Howard, Merrick, Nance, Polk, Sherman, Thurston, Valley, Webster

A current Nebraska map listing the approved counties is available on the state FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/ne.

Based on Secretarial Designations in Iowa and Missouri, there are five additional counties that are contiguous and eligible for disaster programs. They are: Burt, Washington

In response to the expanding ongoing drought conditions affecting crop and livestock producers across Nebraska, USDA has implemented various actions and programs. Specifically, certain counties have been allowed to emergency hay and graze CRP acres and Emergency (EM) Loans are authorized for eligible producers. Steinkruger stated, "As conditions continue to deteriorate, producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA Service Center for detailed information about available programs and updated Secretarial disaster designations."

USDA has expanded emergency haying and grazing provisions to allow an additional 200,000 CRP acres of Grass Waterway, Wetland Restoration (Floodplain and Non-Floodplain) and Farmable Wetland Pilot (Wetland and Buffer) practices. In addition haying is allowed on Rare and Declining Habitat (Prairie Restoration) practices. Haying is limited to 50 percent of the acres and grazing is limited to 75 percent of the acres (or reduced stocking rate). There is a 10 percent payment reduction for acres hayed or grazed.

In addition to the Emergency (EM) Loan Program, the FSA has other loan programs and disaster assistance programs which can be considered in assisting farmers to recover from their losses.

Contact your local FSA Service Center or access additional information about FSA Disaster Assistance and Farm Loan programs at www.fsa.usda.gov.