

Memorandum of Understanding

Between

Farm Service Agency (FSA)
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

For the

2008 Non Insured Assistance Program (NAP) Grazing Loss Assessments
For Non-Irrigated Native Grass

Federal Regulation

Federal Regulations 7-CFR Part 1437.401 (f):

(f) CCC will establish forage losses of acreage intended to be grazed including, in some cases, acreage intended to be mechanically harvested but instead subsequently grazed, on the basis of:

- 1) The percentages of loss of similar mechanically-harvested forage acreage on the farm, or on similar farms in the area when approved yields have been calculated to determine loss, or
- 2) Where there is no similar mechanically-harvested forage acreage on the farm or similar farms in the area, the collective percentage of loss as determined by CCC for the geographical region after consideration of at least two independent assessments of grazed forage acreage conditions. The assessments shall be completed by forage or range specialists in Federal, State, and local government agencies, educational institutions, and private companies not having a financial interest in the outcome of the assessment. Neither the assessments themselves, nor collective loss percentages established pursuant thereto are subject to appeal. CCC's determinations of geographical area for assessments and collective grazing loss are generally applicable to all similarly situated participants farming in such defined geographical region.

Goal

To develop a partnership with the specialized and educational resources and the Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS) to assist in providing an independent and

unbiased assessment utilized in administering the Non Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for native grass grazing.

Assessment Method

NRCS shall serve as one of the representatives to perform the two independent assessments of 2008 grazed forage acreage conditions, as referenced in the above regulation. NRCS has agreed to use the Drought Management Calculator along with the County Emergency Boards (CEB) minutes to assess the losses per county. CEB minutes will be provided by FSA to NRCS for consideration.

The 2008 loss percentages will be established by NRCS using information from both the Drought Management Calculator and the CEB estimates.

NRCS State Office Responsibility: NRCS SO will use local monthly precipitation totals from recording weather stations to augment precipitation information available in the Drought Management Calculator. The Drought Management Calculator uses forage growth curves derived from Ecological Site Descriptions (ESD) contained in the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) and monthly precipitation totals to calculate the “Percent of Normal Herd Size the Grazing Land Can Carry Based On Rainfall During Months Critical to Forage Growth”. This is expressed as a percentage. The amount of the “Loss” can be calculated as a reciprocal of the “Percent of Normal Herd Size”. i.e. if the Calculator indicates that 75% of Normal Herd Size can be supported then a loss of 25% is assumed. NRCS shall provide FSA with the grazing loss recommendations based on estimates provided using the above mentioned protocol.

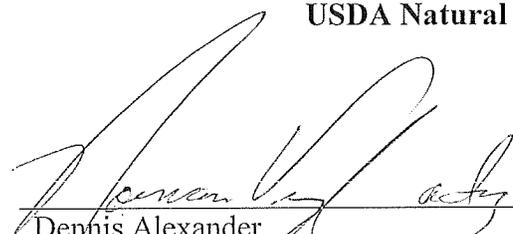
Second Independent Assessment: The second independent assessment will be provided by other organizations such as BLM, Forest Service, and State Land Office. Once all the assessments are in, a discussion will be held by FSA leadership, to establish the percentage of loss for each county.

County Executive Board: The CEB, with the County Committee (COC) concurrence, will estimate losses based on the information derived from the NRCS SO estimates of loss as modeled by the Drought Management Calculator and information provided by other agencies. If COCs does not concur with the percentages provided to them, they can submit documentation to FSA State Office that supports their case.

The FSA State Committee (STC) will have the final approval and right to adjust percentages, if needed, according to regulations.

Agreement Acceptance

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service



Dennis Alexander
State Conservationist

3-4-09
Date

USDA New Mexico State Farm Service Agency



Brenda Archuleta, Acting
State Executive Director

3/4/09
Date