

Commissioner Todd Staples
TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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COMMISSIONER STAPLES APPLAUDS BIG WIN FOR TEXAS FARMERS AND RANCHERS

AUSTIN - Agriculture Commissioner Todd Staples is pleased with the decision by a federal judge to conditionally allow haying and grazing on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage under the Critical Feed Use (CFU) Program. The CFU program is designed to alleviate livestock feed needs resulting from drought and escalating feed costs.

"This is great news for Texas producers who work hard to feed the world and support their families," Commissioner Staples said. "The judge made a sound decision, understanding that opening the land will assist producers who are struggling from the one-two punch of drought and high feed costs."

Earlier this month Commissioner Staples filed an affidavit on behalf of Texas producers who would have suffered severe economic hardships had the National Wildlife Federation succeeded in convincing the court to suspend the use of CRP land for critical haying and grazing.

Today's federal order will allow producers with approved CRP contracts to continue operations. Producers whose applications were being processed at the time of the temporary restraining order will have their applications processed, and producers who can prove they had already invested at least \$4,500 in preparations for the CFU program before the date of legal action may apply.

The CFU program was designed to give farmers and ranchers permission for "special, one-time" hay and forage use of certain CRP acreage after the primary nesting season ends for grass-nesting birds. According to USDA estimates, the initiative would generate around 18 million tons of hay worth approximately \$1.2 billion.

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