

Gasconade County SWCD Announces Drought Assistance

On July 25, 2022 the Missouri Soil & Water Commission met to address the Governor's Emergency Drought Executive Order 22-04, which was signed by Governor Parson on July 21, 2022. The Missouri Soil & Water Commission readdressed protocols put into place during the droughts of 2013 and 2018 and have approved the following allowances for the 53 counties that are already determined to be eligible based on the DNR Drought Monitor. The Gasconade County Soil & Water Conservation District will be implementing the Commission's variance for drought assistance for the entire county.

- A variance will be granted for grazing any area that is currently under maintenance for Access Control. This will allow for grazing as long as the established forages that can withstand grazing. Established practices that would fall into this category are: N-472 Woodland Excursion, WQ10 Streambank Protection, DWC-1 Water Impoundment Reservoirs, and N-391 Riparian Forest Buffers;
- Grazing System considerations includes allowing landowners, who have not attended a Grazing School, to install a well (DSP-3.1) and 1 watering facility (DSP-3.2) and deferring the grazing school requirement for 12 months. The rest of the grazing system would be completed, once the grazing school requirement has been met.
- Pond Cleanout –If a landowner received state cost-share dollars to install a DWC-1 water impoundment reservoir, whether under maintenance or not, the landowner may receive assistance to remove excess sediment. The landowner may receive up to \$1,500 per half acre (up to 2 acres) for sediment removal. The maximum cost-share provided will be \$6,000 regardless of the size of the pond. A 10 year maintenance commitment for the pond will be reinstated from the date of payment.
- Cover Crop Variance. A variance will be granted, allowing cover crops to be harvested for livestock feed at termination providing additional forages and waive the two production crop rotation requirement for the next planted production crop. The lifetime

maximum of \$20,000 will be temporarily removed for operators planning to harvest the forage for feed. These landowners would be eligible for \$30 per acre for the additional acres enroll. All other requirements, such as soil health analysis tests would be required, if applicable.

Please remember that these changes only apply to the State Cost-share Program that is administered through the Gasconade County Soil & Water Conservation District. The end date for these variances will be December 31, 2022. If you are interested in applying for assistance, please contact the office at 573-437-3478 x 3 for more information.