

BEEF BUSINESS

by Julie Mais, editor

In this month's "Beef Business," we present industry news from the USDA about 2019 prevent plant as well as information about grazing promotion.

Farmers prevented plant on more than 19 million acres

Agricultural producers reported they were not able to plant crops on more than 19.4 million acres in 2019, according to a new report released by the USDA. This marks the most prevented plant acres reported since USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) began releasing the report in 2007. This is 17.49 million acres more than reported at this time last year.

Of those prevented plant acres, more than 73% were in 12 Midwestern states, where heavy rainfall and flooding this year has prevented many producers from planting mostly corn, soybeans and wheat.

"Agricultural producers across the country are facing significant challenges and tough decisions on their farms and ranches," USDA Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation Bill Northey said. "We know these are challenging times for farmers, and we have worked to improve flexibility of our programs to assist producers prevented from planting."

USDA supported planting of cover crops on fields where farmers were not able to plant because of their benefits in preventing soil erosion, protecting water quality and boosting soil health. The report

showed where producers planted 2.71 million acres of cover crops so far in 2019, compared with 2.14 million acres at this time in 2018 and 1.88 million at this time in 2017.



To help make cover crops a more viable option, USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) adjusted the haying and grazing date of cover crops,

and USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service held signups in select states that offered producers assistance in planting cover crops. Meanwhile, USDA added other flexibilities to help affected producers, including adjusting the deadline to file acreage reports in select states.

This data report aggregates information from crop acreage reports as of Aug. 1, 2019, which producers file with FSA to maintain program eligibility and to calculate losses for various disaster assistance programs. The crop acreage data report outlines the number of acres planted, prevented from planting, and failed by crop, county and state.

Because some producers have not completed their filing and data are still being processed, FSA will make available subsequent data reports in September, October, November, December and January. Find reports from 2007 to the present on FSA's Crop Acreage Data webpage.

To receive FSA program benefits, producers are required to submit crop acreage reports annually regarding all cropland uses on their farm. This report includes data for producers who had already filed for all deadlines in 2019, including the mid-July deadlines, which are for spring-seeded crops in many locations.

Official USDA estimates of total acres planted, harvested and to be harvested, yield, and production are available from USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

Source: FSA

Livestock highlight benefits of grazing

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) and the Public Lands Council (PLC) launched a digital campaign focused on the value of grazing on Aug. 7. The digital campaign was created to explore key elements of grazing that benefit the environment, rural communities and local economies across the United States.

The four-week campaign launched with a video and blog post featuring Rich Atmore, a California rancher who lived through the destructive 2017 Thomas Fire. With the use of livestock grazing, Atmore mitigated the intensity and damage of wildfires around his home and surrounding urban landscapes.

Research finds that managed livestock grazing prevents catastrophic wildfire, cycles nutrients through the soil, fosters healthy habitats for wildlife and supports rural economic development. Ranchers maintained and preserved seven million acres of habitat for the Greater Sage-grouse, a bird that does not need federal protections thanks largely to the benefits of livestock grazing.

The campaign will continue to share impactful stories about the importance of livestock grazing this August through social media content, online blog posts, and videos. To learn more about the value of livestock grazing in the United States, visit www.ncba.org or www.publiclandscouncil.org.

Source: NCBA

Alliance Releases Report from 2019 Animal Rights National Conference

The Animal Agriculture Alliance released a report Aug. 7 detailing observations from the Animal Rights National Conference, hosted July 25-28 in Alexandria, Va. The event was organized by the Farm Animal Rights Movement and sponsored by Mercy for Animals, The Save Movement, Compassion Over Killing, and The Humane League, along with other animal rights extremist groups.

“Animal rights extremists are becoming increasingly aggressive in their efforts to end animal agriculture,” said Kay Johnson Smith, Alliance president and CEO. “Releasing reports from major activist conferences enables everyone in animal agriculture to prepare for


strategies and tactics targeting their livelihood.”

Similar to last year’s conference, speakers made it clear their vision is animal liberation, not promoting animal welfare.

“There is no such thing as humane slaughter, and anyone who tells you differently is simply lying,” said Michael Budkie of Stop Animal Exploitation Now.

“We need to say that all animal agriculture is cruel and wrong,” said Karen Davis of United Poultry Concerns.

Demetria Atkinson of Redefine Your Mind argued, “Animals are people too.”

A key theme of the conference was the desire to create a vegan world by 2026 to save the environment, but many activists had doubts. 

Source: Animal Agriculture Alliance

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