United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 19, 2023

Zach Ducheneaux
Administrator, Farm Service Agency
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Administrator Ducheneaux:

As the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) continues working to assist farmers and ranchers affected by this year's widespread drought, we write to request that the agency act quickly to authorize emergency haying and grazing flexibility on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres and provide assistance through the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) in affected counties.

As drought conditions worsen across the upper Midwest, farmers and ranchers in our states are concerned that certain CRP acres that are eligible for emergency haying and grazing under D2 conditions may not be authorized in time to prevent the most significant losses. When conditions on the ground worsen, producers often face shortages of forage and available grazing lands, and we ask that USDA provide timely haying and grazing flexibility on CRP acres to support livestock producers during the drought.

In addition, in 2021, ELAP played a critical role in assisting producers who faced losses due to the drought. We appreciated USDA's efforts to improve ELAP coverage by reimbursing producers for a portion of their feed and livestock transportation costs and by lowering the threshold for assistance for water transportation costs. Therefore, we also urge USDA to again prioritize timely ELAP assistance for affected producers.

It is critically important that USDA make technical and financial assistance available to help farmers and ranchers recover and move quickly to make disaster programs available to affected producers during difficult times. Thank you for your efforts on behalf of U.S. agriculture and for your prompt consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

John Thune
United States Senator