



Grasslands grazed, hayed to help cattle

By Kevin Bottrell
Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkansas.com

With six new counties added Thursday, more than half the state is currently authorized for either emergency conservation reserve program haying or grazing.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency allows emergency grazing and haying on conservation reserve program land when a natural disaster, in this case severe drought, threatens livestock. Once the national or state offices approve grazing or haying, it's up each county's agency office to request it. To be approved, they have to document the loss of 40 percent or more of the normal hay and pasture land.

Haying is approved until Aug.

31. Trish Halstead, communications coordinator for the Farm Service Agency, said in a release Thursday that emergency haying is limited to less than 50 percent of each field. Hay has to be taken from the field by Sept. 30. The hay can't be sold, but farmers without livestock can rent or lease haying privileges.

For emergency grazing, farmers have to leave at least 25 percent of each field ungrazed. Livestock must be removed by Oct. 31.

The latest to be added to the list are Butler, Chase, Cowley, Hamilton, Lyon and Marion counties in central Kansas. In the northwest, Wallace, Logan, Gove, Graham and Ellis counties have been approved for grazing while Trego has been approved for grazing and

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Police looking to identify vandal



The Colby Police Department is looking for three people who may have vandalized the rest rooms at Fike Park on Thursday. A police surveillance camera showed an unidentified man who vandalized the door of the men's rest room at 9:24 p.m. Thursday while two women watched. Police Chief Randy Jones said several other people were in the park at the time, and the police are asking anyone with information on these three people to call 460-4460.

State crops suffering under heat

By Roxana Hegeman
The Associated Press

WICHITA – Another month of scorching heat and drought has dealt a heavy beating to the outlook for Kansas crops, a newly released government forecast shows.

Kansas Agricultural Statistics Service estimated on Thursday in its monthly crop production forecast that the size of the state's corn crop would come in at 495 million bushels, down 15 percent from last year.

"The August crop report obviously isn't very uplifting reading for Kansas," said Sue

Schulte, spokeswoman for the Kansas Corn Growers Association. "It shows reductions for Kansas across the board."

That downgraded forecast comes even though Kansas farmers planted 5.1 million corn acres this spring – more than at any time since 1936. But much of the corn acreage was devastated after another month of triple-digit temperatures during a critical stage of development.

The revised forecast for harvested acres is down to 4.5 million acres, meaning 300,000 acres were lost in just the past month when compared to the forecast issued in June.

With the extreme dryness and extreme heat this past month in Kansas, many of those acres are being cut and chopped up as silage for livestock feed, Schulte said.

"The dry weather was there, but then it spread. It got larger and then that heat came in behind it," she said. "That is not a very good combination for anything that wants to grow."

At this rate, Kansas growers are anticipated to actually harvest 150,000 fewer acres than they harvested last year.

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Senator to visit area on tour next week

U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran will stop in Atwood, St. Francis, Sharon Springs and Tribune next week to talk to voters.

On Thursday, Moran will be on Main Street in Atwood from 4 to 5 p.m. and at St. Francis High School from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. Next Friday, he will be on Main Street in Sharon Springs from 8 to 9 a.m. and at the Greeley County Library in Tribune from 9:45 to 10:45 a.m.

Moran recently voted against the debt ceiling deal, saying it would not reduce the national debt.

"This plan also ignores the stark warnings from credit rating agen-

cies," he said. "which stated a \$4 trillion deficit reduction plan would be necessary to prevent a downgrade in the U.S. credit rating."

He voted for a short-term reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration to end the work stoppages, but said Congress should work on a multi-year plan.

He also joined 44 other senators in opposing an arms trade treaty that he felt would restrict the rights of civilian gun owners.

"Our country's sovereignty and the rights of American citizens must not be infringed upon by the United Nations," he said.

Navy band to play here on 10th anniversary of 9/11

The U.S. Navy's premier country and bluegrass band will kick off the Western Plains Art Association's fall season with a concert in Colby on Sept. 11, the 10th anniversary of the 2001 New York terrorist attacks.

Country Current, the Navy's seven-member ensemble, will perform at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 11, in the Colby High School auditorium. The band perform for presidents and generals along with active duty soldiers, veterans and civilians.

Other concerts in Colby include The Hunt Family, a band that performs a variety of music from bluegrass to rock and roll, on Oct. 30 at Colby Community College; the Ozark Jubilee and Doofus from Branson, Mo., on Dec. 11 at Colby High; and the Dallas Brass on April 24 at Colby High.

To get season tickets, call Amie Kendrick at 460-3837, Joan Albers at 460-6448 or Pat Ziegelmeier at 460-5518.

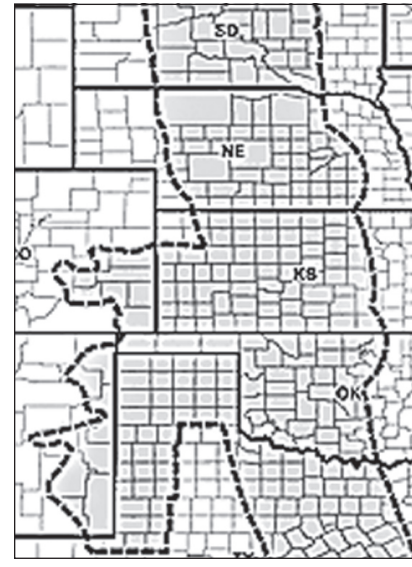
Public comment sought on wind energy impact

As part of a new initiative to develop wind energy projects across the nation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has begun an environmental impact study across a 200-mile corridor extending from the Canadian to Mexican border through the central part of the United States. Included in the study area is part of Thomas County and most of western Kansas.

The study is part of Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar's "Smart from the Start" initiative to evaluate the environmental impact of wind energy development along the study area.

Several public meetings are planned for August and September. The nearest meeting to Colby will be held from 6-8 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 30, in Kearney, Neb., at the Holiday Inn on Second Avenue. A meeting is also planned in Great Bend on Wednesday, Aug. 31.

Residents who live in the study area are encouraged to attend a public meeting to ask questions and raise concerns about possible wind energy development. Topics to be covered



This map shows the area being studied, including the eastern third of Thomas County.

include risks to wildlife and overall environmental impact from possible development. More information can be obtained from Laila Lienesch at (505) 248-6494.



TOMI MILLER/Colby Free Press

High school marching band begins training

Jake Thompson (above, left) clapped to keep time for returning band members Jennilee Gray, Leighton Koel and Braden Sager plus some new freshmen during the Marching Band Academy on Thursday at Colby High School. New and returning band members trained on both marching and music during the week-long academy. Members of the woodwind section (left) practiced in the band room between marching sessions.

