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(Neb.)-Financial Assistance Available For Nebraska Producers Hit By Storm



By: Chris Fankhauser Posted at: 10/24/2013 09:13 AM

(Lincoln)-Livestock producers affected by the devastating blizzard that hit northwest Nebraska are encouraged to apply for assistance through the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Craig Derickson, NRCS State Conservationist in Nebraska, said the NRCS has created a special Livestock Mortality Initiative through its Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). This Initiative is available to producers in the Upper Niobrara White Natural Resources District, which includes Sioux, Box Butte, Dawes and Sheridan counties in northwest Nebraska. Eligible producers have until Nov. 15 to sign up for assistance.

Derickson said this was an unprecedented and devastating event for Nebraska ranchers, and some ranchers are dealing with hundreds of dead animals. According to Derickson, this is not only damaging to ranchers' bottom lines, but if these animals are not disposed of properly, there could be negative impacts to water quality and other natural resources. He stated NRCS conservationists are available to provide technical and financial assistance to help producers dispose of livestock carcasses in a safe manner."

Producers who have not already disposed of livestock can apply for EQIP now. Producers can then get a waiver to allow them to begin working with NRCS to dispose of their deceased livestock before having an approved EQIP contract.

Derickson said typically, producers cannot begin working on an EQIP practice before their EQIP contract has been approved, but since this situation is so time-critical, NRCS is encouraging producers to sign up for EQIP first, then submit a waiver to go ahead and begin animal burial prior to having their EQIP contract approved.

Producers in the area who suffered other damages due to the blizzard – such as damaged fencing, water sources or windbreak losses – may also seek assistance from NRCS through General EQIP funding. The sign up period for General EQIP also runs through November 15 of this year.

Derickson said NRCS is committed to helping livestock producers get back on their feet after this destructive storm while also ensuring Nebraska's natural environment remains healthy and productive.

For more than 75 years, the Natural Resources Conservation Service has helped agricultural producers with

conservation plans. NRCS conservationists will work with landowners on their farm or ranch to develop a conservation plan based on resource goals. Conservation planning assistance is free and does not require participation in financial programs.

For more information about EQIP and the other available conservation programs visit your local NRCS field office or www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov.

(Information courtesy USDA)