

Drought Impact in Emmons County

The Situation

Since 2010, Emmons County has been in a high moisture weather cycle. Farmers and ranchers excelled with high market prices and optimal growing conditions. In 2017, decreased moisture throughout North Dakota led to a drought. Farmers planted and replanted their fields, hoping for average yields. Ranchers put up as much forage as they could from the dry haylands. With the dry conditions, farmers and ranchers needed aid.

Extension Response

NDSU Extension Service – Emmons County worked jointly with the Emmons County Farm Service Agency, Emmons County Soil Conservation and BNC National Bank to put on a drought roundtable meeting. This meeting allowed the organizations involved to understand how the producers in Emmons County were handling the drought and offered producers information on different aid programs offered through FSA and NRCS.

Extension was able to gauge the impact the drought had on producers, offer information on nitrates in feed and water, and provide resources and materials. After the meeting, there was a request for a stress meeting for farmers. Topics of the articles for the newspaper were state and county drought resources, information on testing water from livestock dugouts, testing forages for nitrates and information on nitrates in forages.

Impacts

Drought Meeting

Total of 70 people attended the drought meeting and 81% participated in the Turning Point evaluation.

- 90% of attendants were going to be short on hay
- 56% planned to wean earlier than normal and 51% planned to sell earlier than normal
- Over 50% planned to reduce their cattle herd

Stress Meeting

Total of 22 women participated in the stress meeting and 41% completed an evaluation.

- 89% of participants felt more comfortable understanding rural stress issues and warning signs of stress challenges
- 67% of participants felt more comfortable in their ability to identify and plan useful coping methods for responding to stress and improving wellness

Direct support resulted in **tests submitted** between July to December 2017:

- 3 water samples were sent in to test for nitrates and water quality
- 31 forage samples were sent in to test for Nitrate levels
- 20 forage samples were sent in to test for feed analysis

Feedback

“I didn’t realize our extension office had all of these drought and forage/water testing resources.”

Public Value Statement

Providing drought education and, along with better ways to manage stress to Emmons County farmers, ranchers and their families results in stronger relationships to support operations during times of tough margins.

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