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 DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Funding Still Available for Hay Storage as Deadline Nears
Drought makes program a smart choice for farmers

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Despite drought conditions that have devastated pastures and hay production in Tennessee, demand by farmers is strong for cost share assistance to build hay storage structures according to the Tennessee Department of Agriculture.

Since July 2, more than 1,140 Tennessee farmers have been approved for \$3.7 million in Hay Storage Facility cost share assistance through the Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program (TAEP). Oct. 1 is the deadline for cattle and hay producers to apply for funding of 35 percent up to \$3,500 toward the cost of building a new hay storage structure or an addition to an existing structure.

According to state Agriculture Commissioner Ken Givens, the response from farmers is an indication the program is working and that farmers understand the value of protecting their forage resources.


“The response has been overwhelming which really shows that despite the disastrous growing season, Tennessee farmers are optimistic about the future and understand the importance of protecting their forage resources. The program is working to help farmers weather harsh conditions in the future, and funding is still available for anyone who wants to build now or in time for the spring hay crop.”

According to University of Tennessee Extension forage experts, at least 30 percent of hay stored outside, unprotected can be lost in the first year, and it can continue to lose value as livestock feed over time. Higher production costs and limited hay availability this year makes protecting this resource even more important.

To be eligible for hay storage cost share assistance, farmers must be a Tennessee resident and operate a farm or agribusiness located in the state with at least 10 head of cattle or 50 acres of hay production. Applications must include a project budget with cost quotes.

Producers with livestock must also register their premises with the National Animal Identification System. Livestock premises can be registered at most Farm Service Agency, UT Extension, Farm Bureau or Co-op locations, or online at www.tennessee.gov/agriculture/tpis.

Only hay storage projects that are approved in advance by the Tennessee Department of Agriculture will be eligible for cost share assistance, and farmers will be limited to one application per fiscal year. Once approved, farmers will have until May 1, 2008 to complete approved activities and reimbursement requirements.



Applications for hay storage cost share are on the department's Web site and at most local farm service centers and farm suppliers. For more information about the TAEP Hay Storage Facility cost share program call (615) 837-5323, email Hay.Storage@state.tn.us or visit online at www.picktnproducts.org.

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