

NDSU FeedList Open for Donations to Ranchers

An update to North Dakota State University's FeedList allows farmers and ranchers in other areas to donate feedstuffs easily to North Dakota ranchers who are short of pasture, hay and other livestock feed due to drought.

"Nearly one-third of North Dakota is in extreme drought," said Charlie Stoltenow, NDSU Extension Service assistant director for agriculture and natural resources. "Pastures and hay supplies can't support cattle, and crops are withering. When an Extension colleague in Wisconsin said they wanted to help, we quickly made donating hay or other feedstuffs an easy process."

Farmers and ranchers who have feedstuffs for sale or to donate can list them on the FeedList website at <https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/feedlist>, which connects feed sellers/donors and buyers/receivers. Extension offices, livestock associations, farm organizations, businesses and others may want to coordinate transportation of supplies to North Dakota, Stoltenow said.

Steve Okonek, University of Wisconsin Extension agricultural agent in Trempealeau County, contacted Stoltenow when an area farmer asked how he could donate hay to North Dakota ranchers.

"We're all aware of challenges in agriculture, and any one of us could need help at any time," Okonek said. "When there's extreme weather, other farmers come forward and help, so we now need to help other farmers. Here in Wisconsin, we remember our drought of '88. The truckloads of hay saved some operations."

Andy Schultz called Okonek with the idea of donating some hay to North Dakota ranchers who are starting to sell off beef cattle because their pastures and hay supplies can't support them.

"I know how important rain is to a cow-calf operation," Schultz said. "You make money by keeping costs low and rely on pastures and cheap feed, but you need rain to have pastures. Costs shoot up (when producers have to buy more hay and feed)."

That's why Schultz wants to donate hay to North Dakota ranchers and encourage other farmers who have hay and feedstuffs available to help their agriculture colleagues in need.

"Weather is regional," Schultz said. "One area might get too much rain, and another area be in a drought. If we don't sustain ag in our region, it has a ripple effect in our economy. Small towns and schools suffer."

"A lot of people don't know where their food comes from," he added. "They don't realize if producers have to sell their cows, they just don't bounce back. To be a livestock farmer is different. It takes commitment and building equity. You just don't start up again."

Using the FeedList is free of charge. Anyone who wants to buy or receive, or has feed to sell or donate can complete an online form at the site. Those who need entry help can contact a county office of the NDSU Extension Service. Visit <https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/extension/directory> to find a county office.

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