

Declaration: Ag Assistance Now Available

From Page 1A

(Drought Severe) for eight consecutive weeks based on U.S. Drought Monitor measurements, providing for an automatic designation.

The Drought Monitor is produced in partnership by USDA, the National Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

It helps USDA determine county disaster designations due to drought. The Drought Monitor measures drought intensity on a scale from D1 to D4, as follows:

D1: Moderate Drought
D2: Severe Drought
D3: Extreme Drought
D4: Exceptional Drought

In 2012, USDA designated 2,245 counties in 39 states as disaster areas due to drought, or 71 percent of the United States. At the height of the 2012 drought, the Secretary announced a series of aggressive USDA actions to get help to farmers, ranchers and businesses impacted by the 2012 drought, including lowering the interest rate for emergency loans, working with crop insurance

companies to provide flexibility to farmers, and expanding the use of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres for haying and grazing, which opened 2.8 million acres and brought nearly \$200 million in forage for all livestock producers during a critical period.

Many of those same actions continue to bring relief to producers ahead of the 2013 planting season, including:

- Simplified the Secretarial disaster designation process and reduced the time it takes to designate counties affected by disasters by 40 percent.

- Transferred \$14 million in unobligated program funds into the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) to help farmers and ranchers rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters and for carrying out emergency water conservation measures.

- Updated the emergency loans application process to allow these loans to be made earlier in the season.

- Filed special provisions with the federal crop insurance program to allow haying or grazing of cover crops

without impacting the insurability of planted 2013 spring crops.

- Authorized up to \$5 million in grants to evaluate and demonstrate agricultural practices that help farmers and ranchers adapt to drought.

- Authorized \$16 million in existing funds from its Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to target states experiencing exceptional and extreme drought.

- Installed conservation systems that impacted more than 1 million producers, and reduced water withdrawn from the Ogallala Aquifer by at least 860,000 acre feet, equivalent to the domestic water use of approximately 9.6 million individuals for a year.

- Worked with crop insurance companies to provide flexibility on premium payments to farmers, and one-third of all policyholders took advantage of the payment period.

- Partnered with local governments, colleges, state and federal partners to conduct a series of regional drought workshops with hundreds of producers in Nebraska, Colorado, Arkansas, and Ohio.

A natural disaster designation makes all qualified farm operators in the designated areas eligible for low interest emergency loans.

During times of need, USDA has historically responded to disasters across the country by providing direct support, disaster assistance, technical assistance, and access to credit. USDA's low-interest emergency loans have helped producers recover from losses due to drought, flooding and other natural disasters for decades.

The interest rate on emergency loans currently stands at 2.15 percent, providing a competitive, much-needed resource for producers hoping to recover from production and physical losses associated with natural disasters.

The Obama Administration, with

Agriculture Secretary Vilsack's leadership, has worked tirelessly to strengthen rural America, maintain a strong farm safety net, and create opportunities for America's farmers and ranchers.

U.S. agriculture is currently experiencing one of its most productive periods in American history thanks to the productivity, resiliency, and resourcefulness of our producers. A strong farm safety net is important to sustain the success of American agriculture.

USDA's crop insurance program currently insures 264 million acres, 1.14 million policies, and \$110 billion worth of liability on about 500,000 farms.

In response to tighter financial markets, USDA has expanded the availability of farm credit, helping

struggling farmers refinance loans. Since 2009, USDA has provided more than 128,000 loans to family farmers totaling more than \$18 billion.

Over 50 percent of the loans went to beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

Visit www.usda.gov/drought for the latest information regarding USDA's drought response and assistance.

The 597 primary counties designated as disaster areas today correspond to the following states: Alabama, 14; Arkansas, 47; Arizona, 4; Colorado, 30; Georgia, 92; Hawaii, 2; Kansas, 88; Oklahoma, 76; Missouri, 31; New Mexico, 19; Nevada, 9; South Carolina, 11; Texas, 157; and Utah, 17.

Rain: From Page 1A

the Texas Panhandle ranged from 3.01 inches in Canyonosa to .21 inches in Canadian.

Snow accumulations were also seen in the higher elevations of the West Texas mountain and Big Bend regions, where up to 4 inches was observed in portions of Big Bend National Park.

Around the immediate area of Gaines County, the northern Permian Basin and southern South Plains, Hobbs, N.M. reported 1.42 inches of precipitation from Wednesday's passing system. TTU's weather monitoring station in Seagraves reported .89 inches of rainfall, while Denver City recorded .95 inches.

Brownfield, according to similar totals, received .99 inches of rainfall, while the Lamesa and Andrews communities received 1.18 and 1.32 inches of rainfall

respectively.

The State's heaviest rainfall totals were observed in Waco, where 4.45 inches of rain fell. The southeastern community of Beaumont received over 3.6 inches of rainfall, while the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex saw precipitation ranges over 2.5 inches.

As Wednesday's system moved out of the Lone Star State, the National Weather Service, on Thursday, said the dry spell will be short-lived, as a front is expected to bring showers and thunderstorms as it approaches from the north on Saturday.

The NWS received scattered reports of street and road flooding across Texas from Wednesday's system, but no severe damage or injuries.

Local News Briefs

FUMC to Host 'Financial Peace' Class Sunday PM

More than one and a half million families have positively changed their financial future through Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University (FPU).

Updated in summer 2012, the now nine-week course provides families and individuals with practical tools to gain control of their finances and set themselves up for long-term financial success.

The course meets once a week where a different lesson is taught by Dave on DVD followed by a small-group discussion. Lessons include budgeting, relationships and money, getting out of debt, saving for emergencies and investing.

FPU will be held in Seminole at the First United Methodist Church, 304 SW Avenue B, beginning today (Sunday, Jan. 13, 2013) at 3 p.m.

Contact Marvin Gregory at (432)758-3241 for more information or to register.

Since its inception in 1994 FPU has helped more than 1.6 million families positively change their financial future. Through common-sense principles and small-group accountability, FPU gives people the tools they need to change their behavior and succeed financially. On average families who complete FPU pay off \$5,300 and save \$2,700 in the first 90 days. Following the class nearly 94 percent of those families budget regularly.

"FPU will not only transform the way you handle money, but also your marriage and other areas of your life," says Ramsey. "This isn't a boring financial class. We make learning about money fun and easy to understand so people in every situation can benefit from the information."

Ramsey knows first-hand the pain that financial stress can cause.

Have a news brief you need publicized or announced?

Let us help!!!

(432) 758-3667 ph
(432) 758-2136 fax

news@seminolesentinel.com
or come by 406 S. Main St.
between the hours of 8:30 a.m.
and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday

After creating a net worth of more than a million dollars by age 26, he quickly lost it all. Since then Ramsey has helped families and individuals across the country learn how to get control of their finances and avoid debt so they don't have to experience the same pain he did.

FPU lessons also include guest speakers Rachel Cruze, speaker and daughter of Dave Ramsey; Jon Acuff, author of Wall Street Journal best-seller *Quit* and popular blog *Stuff*; Chris Christians Like; and Chris Hogan, counselor and speaker for the Dave Ramsey organization.

The revised FPU will be offered through churches and community centers. After purchasing a membership each participant receives a workbook, Dave Ramsey's *Complete Guide to Money*, an envelope system and an audio CD library. Participants will also have access to budgeting forms and MP3s of all the lessons. For more information or to purchase a membership, go to www.daveramsey.com.

About Dave Ramsey

Dave Ramsey is America's trusted voice on money and business. He's authored four New York Times best-selling books: *Financial Peace*, *More Than Enough*, *The Total Money Makeover* and *EntreLeadership*. The Dave Ramsey Show is heard by more than 6 million listeners each week on more than 500 radio stations and iHeartRadio. Follow Dave on Twitter at @DaveRamsey and on the web at daveramsey.com.

Lions to Hold Annual Pancake Supper Feb. 1

The Seminole Lions Club will be hosting their annual "Charlie Ray Memorial Pancake Supper" on Friday, Feb. 1, at the Seminole Elementary School cafeteria.

Ticket prices for the fund raiser is set for \$5 for adults and \$3 for students. Children under the age of 6, will eat free.

Tickets for the meal can be purchased from any active member of the Seminole Lions Club, or by contacting the Seminole Area Chamber of Commerce, 111 S.E. Ave. B.

The supper, which is an "all you can eat" event, will be held from 4 to 7 p.m.

Proceeds from the fund raiser will be used by the local club to fund various charitable contributions conducted by the club on an annual basis.

The Seminole Lions Club meets

every Tuesday, at 12-noon, at the First Presbyterian Church's Fellowship Hall, located in the 200 block of S.W. Ave. C.

Persons interested about the Seminole Lions Club, or becoming an active member, are encouraged to attend a meeting.

USDA Accepting Discrimination Claims on Loans

If you, or someone you know, believe the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has improperly denied you farm loan benefits between 1981 and 2000 because you are Hispanic or female, you may be eligible to apply for compensation.

Claims must be filed before March 25, 2013 to be considered for cash payment or loan forgiveness.

If you think you might be eligible to file a claim, please access the Farmer and Rancher Call Center or Website: 1-888-508-4429 or www.farmerclaims.gov

**Thank you
for reading the
Seminole Sentinel!**



MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
SEMINOLE HOSPITAL DISTRICT

Are You Interested in a
Healthcare Profession

But
Can't Afford The Education?



**We Have
A
Scholarship
That
Might
Work for
You!**

Go To
www.seminolehospitaldistrict.com

For More Information Today!

Don't miss out on outstanding offers on outstanding machines.

Purchase a new center pivot, corner, or linear machine and receive:

Large Cash Allowance

OR

Low Rate Financing

See your local Valley dealer for details!



Valley Irrigation & Pump Service, Inc
1301 North Main
432-758-5881 or 1-800-778-5881

