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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Missouri Soil and Water Districts Commission aids agriculture community facing drought

*Actions will assist counties affected by severe, extreme and exceptional drought according to the U.S. Drought Monitor*

JEFFERSON CITY, MO, JULY 30, 2018 - The Missouri Soil and Water Districts Commission has approved the following five actions in response to Governor Parson's Executive Order 18-05 Drought Alert:

1. Require soil and water conservation districts to move landowners completing the drought practices listed below to the top of waiting lists.
2. Defer the Grazing School Requirement for 12 months after contract approval for water development and water distribution grazing system practices. The water development contracts will consist only of pipeline from the water source and one watering tank. The rest of the system can be designed and installed after the landowner has completed an approved grazing school. It is important that producers understand managed grazing prior to designing their systems.
3. Implement a pond cleanout program. The sediment in the pond must be completely removed. A flat rate of \$1,000 per half acre (up to 2 acres) will be paid. The maximum cost-share provided will be \$4,000 regardless of the size of the pond. A 10-year maintenance commitment for the pond will be reinstated from the date of payment. This cleanout program is available only for state cost-share ponds currently under maintenance and those out of maintenance.
4. A variance will be provided to raise the cover crop practice maximum to \$30,000 from the current \$20,000 lifetime limit and to allow cover crops to be hayed at termination to provide additional forage. Landowners over the \$20,000 maximum will receive \$30 per acre for any additional acres enrolled. The seeding rates and mixtures the Natural Resources Conservation Service developed for its drought program must be used. Other requirements in the policy still apply.

5. The cover crop practice only applies to cropland. Landowners that have not reached their \$20,000 maximum will continue to follow current policy, which allows a \$30 per acre payment for a one to two species cover crop mix and a \$40 per acre payment for mixes with three or more cover crop species. Grazing is allowed under current policy. Cover crop soil health tests prior to planting are still required.

To learn more, contact your local soil and water conservation district at <https://mosoilandwater.land/>. For a list of counties facing severe, extreme and exceptional drought, see the U.S. Drought Monitor map at <https://dnr.mo.gov/drought.htm>.

Soil and water conservation practices are funded by the Parks and Soils Sales Tax. Since voters approved the tax more than 30 years ago, Missouri has prevented more than 185 million tons of soil from eroding, thus improving the state's water quality and keeping farmland productive.

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