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Contact: Jamie Mara
Director of strategic communications, Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative
(920) 209-3990 | jmara@voiceofmilk.com

Midwest dairy farmers praise decision to move up cover crop harvest date

USDA action aims to address concerns about livestock feed supplies

GREEN BAY, Wis. — Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative, one of the largest dairy co-ops in the country, today applauded the U.S. Department of Agriculture's decision to allow farmers to harvest cover crops early as they work to ensure adequate feed supplies for livestock.

[The USDA said today](#) it will move the allowable harvest date for acres in its prevented planting program to Sept. 1, up from Nov. 1, due to the impact of this year's unusually wet weather.

[The decision](#) also says that cutting for silage, haylage and baleage will be treated the same as haying or grazing. This applies to this cropping year only. [Click here](#) for a Q&A.

The following is a statement from Mitch Davis, treasurer of Edge and general manager of Davis Family Dairies in south-central Minnesota:



"The wet spring has made the risk of a shortage of livestock feed for the coming year very real for many of our dairy farmers throughout the Midwest who are struggling to get a crop in. This will give all livestock producers options to deal with the extraordinary conditions.

"The decision-makers at USDA and the many lawmakers who pressed this issue deserve much credit for listening to our farmers and recognizing the unique challenges they're facing this growing season."

After hearing members' concerns, Edge raised the issue with the USDA's Risk Management Agency [in a letter](#) last month.

Edge would also like to thank Reps. Dusty Johnson of South Dakota and Angie Craig of Minnesota for their leadership on introducing the Feed Emergency Enhancement During Disasters Act. The FEEDD Act was announced June 11 in the House of Representatives. Additionally, Edge would like to thank Sens. John Thune of South Dakota and Dick Durbin of Illinois who led a Senate letter to USDA, and the Wisconsin congressional delegation for a letter to the agency which all helped to elevate this issue.

More details:

Today's decision provides an emergency waiver to allow for haying, grazing or chopping of a cover crop starting on Sept. 1 without producers taking a further discount on their prevented planting insurance claims. This adjustment is only available for livestock producers' own use or harvested crops that will be donated.

Photo: [Click here](#) to download a photo of Mitch Davis

Tweet about this: #Dairy farm group @voiceofmilk praises @USDA decision on Sept. 1 date for early cover crop harvesting <https://bit.ly/2ZuztOy>

About Edge:

Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative provides dairy farmers throughout the Midwest with a powerful voice — the voice of milk — in Congress, with customers and within their communities. Edge, based in Green Bay, Wis., is one of the top cooperatives in the country based on milk volume. For more information, visit voiceofmilk.com.

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