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Clover Connection

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Tough times don't last, tough people do! I saw this saying as I was scrolling through posts about the wildfires that recently swept through parts of west Texas. Amid all the devastation, it didn't take long for all three supply points to be fully stocked with hay for surviving cattle.

While I'm sure many people have heard about it in the news, AgriLife has had an important role on the road to recovery and rebuilding. Here is a portion of an article that was distributed recently:

“Come get it or let us know you need it and we will deliver it, or let us know your neighbor needs it and we will get it to them,” said Danny Nusser, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service regional program director in Amarillo.

Nusser said the three Livestock Supply Points set up by AgriLife Extension have plenty of hay for everyone who might have been affected by the wildfires that ripped through the Texas Panhandle on March 6 and continued for days. Efforts are beginning to shift away from hay collections and toward fencing and longer-term needs.

“If we see there is a need for more hay, we have lists of individuals just waiting to be called and eager to help,” Nusser said. “We have people on our list who are offering acreage for grazing for anyone who needs to move some cattle for a few months.”

The outpouring of aid has been overwhelming, he said. From volunteers donating their time to people sending truckloads of feed and hay from halfway across the nation, the response to this crisis has been tremendous.

“Now our focus is to get the donated material out to the ranchers and their livestock,” Nusser said.

Documenting the number of dead cattle is the biggest issue facing ranchers and government agencies trying to get financial assistance for those hit hardest by the recent wildfires, he said.

Some of the programs being considered are:

– Emergency Conservation Program, a cost-share program that will help restore fences and some structures that were burned. It may be several months before a rancher would see any money from it.

– Livestock Indemnity Program, which basically pays for losses of livestock, will take time also. Ranchers are advised to keep good accurate records and have a third party witness any death loss.

– Environmental Quality Incentive Program funds also could be used to rebuild some of the infrastructure once the perimeter fences are built and possibly for some grazing deferment.

“The FSA offices need to know how much fence in terms of miles will be needed,” Nusser said. “Also, how many dead animals do we have out there. The closer we get to reality, the better argument we can make.”

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