

## 2021 DROUGHT DISASTER LIVESTOCK WATER SUPPLY PROGRAM DEACTIVATED

The Drought Disaster Livestock Water Supply Assistance Program (Program) was created in 1991 as an emergency program to assist farmers and ranchers who were experiencing livestock water shortages due to extreme drought conditions. This Department of Water Resources (DWR) program encourages drought resilient water supply developments in the form of a 50% cost share, with up to \$4,500 per project, and a limit of up to three projects per applicant. Eligible projects include new water wells; rural water system connections; pipeline extensions; pasture taps and associated works; and labor, materials, and equipment rental costs to develop new water supply projects.

On April 8, 2021, Governor Doug Burgum declared a statewide drought emergency and the State Water Commission (SWC) reactivated the Program. The Program's initial budget was a little over half a million dollars (which was the remainder of the 2017 Program budget) and producers in 49 of 53 North Dakota counties were eligible. There was unprecedented demand, so additional Program funding was added on April 20, May 5, June 8, and July 30 of 2021. In total, the Program budget was \$6.1 million. Additionally, by summer's end in 2021, all North Dakota counties were included in the Program.

The Program had last been authorized starting in 2017, and as drought conditions improved statewide, it was deactivated in December 2019. However, as the spring and summer of 2020 passed, there were signs that the landscape was becoming dry again. Throughout the winter of 2020 and spring of 2021, there was very little snow cover or precipitation across the state. Starting in February 2021, staff at the DWR started to prepare for the chance of another Program activation, which ultimately came to fruition.

At the August 11, 2022, Water Commission meeting, the decision was made to deactivate the 2021 Program as there were no areas of North Dakota that were classified as having emergency drought conditions. As such, the Program was officially deactivated - effective September 1, 2022. Those projects that were either approved by September 1, or received extensions, can still be completed by producers through the deadline they received via letter from DWR.

As of the writing of this article, under the 2021 Program, DWR had approved a total of 1,533 drought-resilient livestock water supply projects from 1,097 individual applicants. Of those, 871 projects had been completed

and Program participants had received a total of \$3.36 million in cost-share reimbursements for those completed projects.

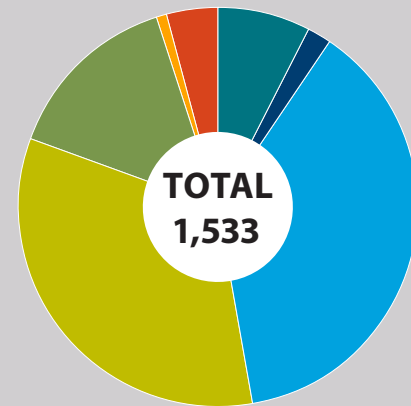
There are just over 660 projects that have not reached their construction deadlines and are still being pursued by applicants. If all of these projects are completed, another \$2.7 million in cost-share could be distributed back to producers.

To put the 2021 reactivation into context, when the Program was last open in 2017-2019, there were a little more than 500 projects completed, with a total cost-share reimbursement of \$1.5 million. As mentioned previously, the 2021 Program has already eclipsed this after only a year and a half – with 871 projects completed and counting!

The success of the 2021 Program can be attributed to the complete team effort put forward by all involved DWR team members. In addition, credit needs to be extended to the Governor’s Office, Legislature, and Water Commissioners who saw the need to make funding available for the Program during one of the driest periods on record in North Dakota. The DWR and SWC will remain vigilant and continue to monitor conditions to determine if program reactivation is needed.

## TYPES OF PROJECTS APPROVED OR COMPLETE

Through September 1, 2022



61	Stock Tanks
14	Pumps
219	Rural Water Connections/Pasture Taps
513	Pipeline Extension
581	New Well
30	Generator
115	Electrical/Solar

