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May 3, 2021

National Wildfire Awareness Month is Reminder to Stay Vigilant

NMDA reminds landowners in agriculture industry to be aware of fire restrictions

LAS CRUCES – With drought persisting in the Southwest, the New Mexico Department of Agriculture reminds the public – and particularly, those in the agriculture industry – to be aware of the risk, be vigilant in reducing accidental sparks and pay attention to fire restrictions.

“Much of the land in the state is used for agriculture, and we want to ensure that those in the industry are prepared when it comes to potential wildfire on their lands,” said New Mexico Agriculture Secretary Jeff Witte. “May is National Wildfire Awareness Month, which serves as an important reminder that we all must remain vigilant and do our part to mitigate fire-related disasters.”

New Mexico has 25,044 farms and ranches, according to the most recent U.S. Census of Agriculture. As of 2020, farms operate on over 40 million acres of land in the state.

The New Mexico State University College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences is hosting a free webinar titled “Be Prepared for Wildfire – Special Focus on Ranches and Farms” from 12 to 1 p.m. May 6 as part of Cooperative Extension Service’s “Learning to Live with Fire: How to Prepare for Wildfire Season in New Mexico” webinar series. To register, visit NMSU Extension’s [Learning to Live with Fire](#) website.

“Farms and ranches in New Mexico have unique circumstances that pose wildfire risks to their operations,” said Doug Cram, NMSU Extension Forest and Fire Specialist. “However, these can be mitigated with a little know-how and advanced preparation.”

The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) Forestry Division promoted New Mexico Wildfire Awareness Week March 28 to April 3. The theme, wildfire preparedness is year-round, is a reminder that it’s everyone’s responsibility to prevent human-caused wildfires no matter what season we are in.

“Extreme drought is impacting the entire state right now,” said State Forester Laura McCarthy. “All it takes is one careless mistake for a wildfire to spread and threaten communities and lives. It’s always important to take precautions and be aware of any fire restrictions in your community and to ensure that your home and property are protected.”

Last month the EMNRD Forestry Division announced an interagency effort with the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management under the Southwest Coordinating Group to develop a map-based tool to inform the public about fire restrictions on public lands.

The new informational web tool is designed to provide the public with clear, easy-to-find fire restrictions information in New Mexico (nmfireinfo.com) and Arizona (wildlandfire.az.gov) and also links users to the agencies implementing fire restrictions for more detailed information.

Fire restrictions are implemented in an effort to help decrease human-caused fires during periods of high fire potential by restricting activities which are the most common causes of wildfires. By providing a resource with accurate and timely information, the goal is to educate and increase compliance, therefore reducing preventable human-caused fires.

For tips on being prepared around your home, visit the [Wildfire Preparedness Is Year-Round](#) site.

[Click here](#) for NMDA’s most recent Natural Hazard Mitigation publication, which includes information regarding wildfires, extreme heat, drought, high winds and more.

For more information regarding wildland fire, related fire prevention and management information, visit the New Mexico Forestry Division [website](#).

The New Mexico Department of Agriculture benefits the public by promoting the viability and advancement of New Mexico agriculture and affiliated industries. The agency promotes a fair marketplace, food protection, marketing, and economic development; supports the beneficial use and conservation of natural resources; and works cooperatively with the public and private sectors. For grant cycles beginning in 2019, the agency has administered over \$1.5 million in funds to support agriculture initiatives in the state through the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program and Healthy Soil Program combined.

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Cutline: May is National Wildfire Awareness Month, which serves as a reminder to stay

vigilant. With drought persisting in the Southwest, the New Mexico Department of Agriculture reminds the public – and particularly, those in the agriculture industry – to be aware of the risk, be vigilant in reducing accidental sparks and pay attention to fire restrictions. Wildfires can reach structures quickly. (Photo by Jami Gonzales)