

Navajo Nation invests in protections for drought conditions

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SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. – President Russell Begaye invested in protections against the impacts of extreme drought on the Navajo Nation’s pastures, rangelands and forage acres when he signed a contract to extend the Nation’s crop insurance coverage Nov. 11.

“Our people depend on the land for farming, grazing and ranching. A successful farming or ranching season is contingent upon sufficient precipitation,” President Begaye said. “As the Nation endures drought conditions during the summer months and beyond, we must invest in crop insurance to lessen the impacts that low rainfall has on our agricultural industries.”

Provided through CKP Insurance, the crop insurance is a part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Pasture, Rangeland and Forage Insurance Program.

The insurance program is based on precipitation using the Rainfall Index, which is a comprehensive dataset of precipitation amounts throughout the country.

The Nation first purchased crop insurance for the year 2017 and netted approximately \$17 million in indemnities.

For 2018, the Nation has reported a net benefit of approximately \$19 million bringing the net

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benefit since enrollment to over \$36 million.

The indemnities will be used to fund infrastructure projects through the Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture's Agriculture Infrastructure Fund Management and Expenditure Program.

"Looking at 2019, there's potential for the Navajo Nation to gain approximately \$25 million dollars in crop insurance indemnities," Begaye said. "The protections against low rainfall provide for improvements to our irrigation systems and other agricultural infrastructure projects while offsetting losses for low harvests."