

USDA Reassures Farmers and Ranchers in States Affected by Extreme Weather

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WASHINGTON, July 15, 2011 —The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reminds farmers and ranchers in states across the country that USDA offers a variety of resources for those affected by recent extreme weather, including floods, drought, fires and tornadoes. USDA also urges producers in need or those with questions to contact their local county or state USDA Service Center or Farm Service Agency office for assistance. In a recent tour of flooding in Iowa and Nebraska, as well as droughts and wildfires in Arizona and New Mexico, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack promised farmers, ranchers and others that USDA would continue to work hard to deliver assistance to those in need.

“America’s farmers and rural communities are vitally important to our nation’s economy and our values, and my heart goes out to all who are facing hardships because of severe weather and natural disasters,” said Vilsack. “In the past two months alone, I have visited with hundreds of Americans who have had to put their lives and livelihoods on hold to deal with floods, tornadoes, drought and wildfires. Since the beginning, I have instructed USDA staff in the affected states that our main priority must be to work with farmers, ranchers and others to explain the type of aid that is available. We will continue to listen to your concerns and, whenever possible, offer assistance to help you through these difficult times.”

Heavy rainfall, snowmelt, and flood conditions have caused crop damage and slowed planting in many states. USDA's Risk Management Agency reminds producers faced with questions on prevented planting, replant, or crop losses to contact their crop insurance company for more information. Other types of USDA assistance available to those affected by flooding include the Emergency Loan Program and the Emergency Watershed Protection program.

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USDA reminds producers affected by drought and fires that resources are available to cover losses, including losses to livestock, crops, orchard trees, and private forests. Types of USDA assistance to farmers and ranchers may include the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE), federal crop insurance, and the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program.

Through spring and summer, drought and wildfires have affected millions of acres of cropland, forests and grasslands in the United States. Drought conditions stretch from Arizona to the southern Atlantic States.

USDA continues working with state and local officials, as well as our federal partners, to make sure people have the necessary resources to recover from these challenges.

To learn more about USDA's disaster assistance, please visit http://www.usda.gov/Emergency_Preparedness_and_Response.html

To find the USDA Service Center nearest you, please visit <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=us&agency=fsa>

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