



News Release

USDA Designates 2 Counties in Massachusetts as Primary Natural Disaster Areas

WASHINGTON, February 5, 2014 — The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has designated two counties in Massachusetts as primary natural disaster areas due to losses caused by excessive moisture and heat that occurred during the 2013 crop year. Those counties are:

Hampden Hampshire

"Our hearts go out to those Massachusetts farmers affected by recent natural disasters," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "President Obama and I are committed to ensuring that agriculture remains a bright spot in our nation's economy by sustaining the successes of America's farmers, ranchers, and rural communities through these difficult times. We're also telling Massachusetts producers that USDA stands with you and your communities when severe weather and natural disasters threaten to disrupt your livelihood."

Farmers in the following counties in Massachusetts also qualify for natural disaster assistance because their counties are contiguous. Those counties are:

Berkshire Franklin Worcester

Farmers in the following counties in **Connecticut** also qualify for natural disaster assistance because their counties are contiguous. Those counties are:

Hartford Litchfield Tolland

All counties listed above were designated natural disaster areas on February 5, 2014, making all qualified farm operators in the designated areas eligible for low interest emergency (EM) loans from USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. FSA has a variety of programs, in addition to the EM loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity.

Additional programs available to assist farmers include the Emergency Conservation Program, Federal Crop Insurance, and the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program. Interested farmers may contact their local USDA Service Centers for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs. Additional information is also available online at <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>.

Secretary Vilsack also reminds producers that Congress has not funded the five disaster assistance programs authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill. These are SURE; the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP); the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP); the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP); and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP). Production losses due to disasters occurring after September 30, 2011, are not eligible for disaster program coverage.

FSA news releases are available on FSA's website at www.fsa.usda.gov via the "Newsroom" link.

#

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).