



Farm Service Agency

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News Release

For Immediate Release

USDA Designates California Ag Counties for Drought Disaster Assistance

DAVIS, CA - Aug. 29, 2013 — The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has designated 57 of California's 58 counties as natural disaster areas due to damages and losses caused by extreme drought in 2013. San Francisco is the only county not designated.

"Just about everyone in California agriculture has been negatively affected by drought this year," said Val Dolcini, Farm Service Agency State Executive Director. "California's diverse farmers and ranchers of all sizes and backgrounds have experienced drought conditions and water shortages and may find help at FSA offices."

Agricultural operators in all counties designated as natural disaster areas may qualify for low interest emergency (EM) loans from USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA). The agency will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. The maximum amount for an EM loan is \$500,000.

Counties that are contiguous to the primary disaster counties declared also qualify for USDA natural disaster assistance. California county drought disaster declarations from the USDA Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack began early this year in February. With the addition of 25 primary disaster counties declared this month, all but one county in California are now primary or contiguous disaster assistance-eligible counties.

Farmers and ranchers in designated counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for the EM loan to help cover part of their actual losses. To verify the deadline for application in your area, contact your county's Farm Service Agency Office. You can visit www.usda.gov/ca to get the location of all FSA offices in any state.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has conservation-related disaster assistance to protect soil, water and habitat (www.nrcs.usda.gov). Small, non-farming businesses in USDA disaster-designated counties may be eligible for disaster assistance from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) (www.sba.gov/disaster). For a comprehensive online source for all federal disaster assistance, visit www.disasterassistance.gov .

The Farm Service Agency's Emergency Conservation Program may also help restore conversation-related farm property and facilities. And the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program is available for producers who have enrolled in this annual protection program prior to the deadline earlier this year. For further information, contact your local USDA Service Center regarding all program eligibility requirements and application procedures. Additional information is also available online at <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>.

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