



NEWS RELEASE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE • FARM SERVICE AGENCY

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Secretarial Designation Triggers Disaster Relief Farmers and Ranchers May Receive Federal Payments

(Spokane, WA), Jan. 12, 2011 – A Secretarial Disaster Designation this week triggers eligibility for Washington farmers and ranchers to receive federal financial relief for crop losses. The Secretary of Agriculture declared 20 Washington counties natural disaster areas due to multiple devastating weather events starting in April of 2010. The designation allows agricultural producers in the designated and adjacent counties to request low-interest emergency loans and direct payments under Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payment (SURE) program.

"Washington producers experienced losses to multiple crops as a result of combined effects of excessive rain, frosts, freezes, unseasonably cold weather, and high winds," said Judy Olson, Farm Service Agency State Executive Director in Spokane.

In addition to the emergency loans that the Farm Service Agency has always offered, the 2008 Farm Bill added new disaster programs, including the SURE program. The program provides a direct payment that helps cover revenue lost when a natural disaster impacts crop quality or production. Producers need to have already purchased crop insurance or Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for all of their economically significant crops to be eligible for SURE payments according to Olson.

SURE payments will be made based on a complex formula that takes into account the difference between guaranteed revenue and the actual revenue made for a farm. Producers will need to show documentation of losses or prevented plantings. SURE Program applications for 2010 crop losses will be accepted in 2011, when the 2010 farm revenue data becomes available.

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"Because SURE is a revenue program, payments are made only after revenue for the year is known," said Olson. "Producers needing immediate financial assistance may apply for an emergency loan or inquire about other FSA disaster programs."

Low interest emergency loans may be used to replace essential property or pay production costs associated with the disaster year. They may also be used to pay essential living expenses, reorganize a farming operation or refinance certain debts. FSA is accepting emergency loan applications until early September, 2011.

Interested farmers and ranchers may contact their local FSA office listed under U.S. Department of Agriculture for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for emergency loans and other programs. More information is also available online at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa>.

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