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United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

AUG 1 2012

The Honorable Dennis Dugaard
Governor
State of South Dakota
Pierre, South Dakota 57501

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Dear Governor Dugaard:

With the publication of the final rule of the disaster designation on July 12, 2012, found at 7 CFR 759, I am designating 25 South Dakota counties as primary natural disaster areas in accordance with 7 CFR 759.5(a), due to a recent drought. The primary counties included under this designation are:

Bennett	Custer	Haakon	Lincoln	Todd
Bon Homme	Davison	Hanson	McCook	Tripp
Butte	Douglas	Hutchinson	Meade	Turner
Charles Mix	Fall River	Jackson	Pennington	Union
Clay	Gregory	Lawrence	Shannon	Yankton

These counties have suffered from a drought intensity value of at least D2 (Drought-Severe) for 8 or more consecutive weeks or D3 (Drought-Extreme) or higher at any time during the growing season according to the U. S. Drought Monitor (see <http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>).

In accordance with section 321(a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, 14 counties are named as contiguous disaster counties. The contiguous counties included under this designation are:

Aurora	Harding	Lyman	Minnehaha	Stanley
Brule	Jones	Mellette	Perkins	Ziebach
Dewey	Lake	Miner	Sanborn	

A Secretarial disaster designation makes farm operators in primary counties and those counties contiguous to such primary counties eligible to be considered for certain assistance from the Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met. This assistance includes FSA emergency loans. Farmers in eligible counties have 8 months from the date of a Secretarial disaster declaration to apply for emergency loan assistance. FSA will consider each emergency loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of production losses, security available, and repayment ability.

Local FSA offices can provide affected farmers with further information.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary