

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR REQUESTING A DISASTER DESIGNATION FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA)

Agricultural disasters caused by unusual adverse weather conditions substantially affect farmers and ranchers throughout California every year. The following sequence of events provides information necessary to request a USDA Secretarial designation.

*Each county should determine which entity (e.g., Board of Supervisors, County Emergency Services Manager, County Agricultural Commissioner's Office) has the lead in coordinating a request for a USDA Secretarial designation. A local proclamation of an emergency is not required to request an USDA Secretarial designation; therefore, the Board of Supervisors' involvement in this procedure will differ from county to county. However, each county should establish a coordination plan to ensure that the applicable parties are aware of the situation.*

- Local government initiates a request for a disaster designation for agricultural losses.
- The County Agricultural Commissioner determines that an unusual incident has occurred which caused severe physical property or production losses and has adversely affected local farmers, ranchers, and/or aquaculturists.
- The county's lead agency informs the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) of the situation. The OES Individual Assistance Section will provide the lead agency with a copy of the *California County Agricultural Commissioner Disaster Report* form, technical assistance, and follow up with any request for assistance, if necessary.
- The county has 60 days from the end of the incident to request a USDA disaster designation through State OES.
- The county submits a letter to the Director of OES requesting the state to pursue a USDA disaster designation on behalf of the county. The request should include a completed *California County Agricultural Commissioner Disaster Report* form(s).
- OES Individual Assistance Section will review the request and coordinate with the USDA State Office and the California Department of Food and Agriculture.
- If damage estimates warrant a request to USDA, OES will compose a letter to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture requesting implementation of the USDA Emergency Loan Program.
- The Director of OES, as the Governor's designee, must submit the request to USDA no later than 90 days from the end of the incident.
- The USDA Secretary's office notifies the USDA State Office in Davis of the request and asks for a Damage Assessment Report (DAR).
- USDA State office requests the local FSA office, in conjunction with the Agricultural Commissioner, to complete the DAR.

- FSA will work with local USDA agencies and other federal, state, and local agricultural agencies, as appropriate, to conduct an assessment of crop and production losses to complete the DAR.
- The DAR is submitted to the State FSA office. State FSA will review the DAR and then make a recommendation to the USDA Secretary.
- The USDA Secretary will either approve or deny the request and notify the State.
- State OES will notify the County Board of Supervisors, County OES, and County Agricultural Commissioner of the decision.
- If the request is approved, the county FSA office notifies farmers, ranchers, and aquaculturists of the availability of the emergency loans and any other USDA assistance that may be available.