USDA

United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

AUG - 8 2012

The Honorable Terry E. Branstad
Governor
State of Iowa
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Dear Governor Branstad:

With the publication of the final rule of the disaster designation on July 12, 2012, found at 7 CFR 759, I am designating 4 Iowa 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:

Lyon Plymouth Sioux Woodbury

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, six counties are named as contiguous disaster counties. The contiguous counties included under this designation are:

Cherokee Crawford Ida Monona O'Brien Osceola

All other Iowa counties that would be eligible under 7 CFR 759.5 (a), already have been designated as primary natural disaster counties.

Also, in accordance with section 321(a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, counties in adjacent States are named as contiguous disaster areas. Those States, counties, and numbers are:

Minnesota **(2)** Nobles and Rock

Nebraska **(2)** Dakota and Thurston

South Dakota **(3)** Lincoln, Minnehaha, and Union

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