

# 13 areas get disaster aid

By LEN RICHARDSON

**C**ALIFORNIA Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary A.G. Kawamura has commended the USDA for its decision to designate 13 California counties primary natural disaster areas.

"California farmers and ranchers have faced significant weather challenges over the last three years, especially the extreme freeze earlier this year and recent drought conditions," says Kawamura. "I urge all eligible producers to explore the USDA's emergency programs to help with their recovery."

The following information was announced by the USDA Farm Service Agency:

*San Benito County* was designated a primary natural disaster area due to losses caused by extremely low temperature and freezing conditions that occurred from Jan. 12-24. Also eligible because they are contiguous are Fresno, Merced, Monterey, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz counties.

*San Joaquin County* was designated a primary natural disaster area due to losses caused by the combined effects of drought and freezing temperatures that occurred during the period of Oct. 15, 2006, and continuing. Contiguous areas also eligible are Alameda, Amador, Calaveras, Contra Costa, Sacramento

## Key Points

- CDFG Secretary Kawamura urges use of emergency loans.
- USDA designated 13 California counties as disaster areas.
- Farmers have eight months from declaration to apply for loans.

and Stanislaus counties.

*Contra Costa and Fresno counties* were designated primary natural disaster areas due to losses caused by the combined effects of drought, higher-than-normal temperatures and prolonged freezing conditions that occurred during the period of Oct. 15, 2006, and continuing. Also eligible because they are contiguous are Alameda, Inyo, Kings, Madera, Mono, Monterey, Sacramento, San Benito, San Joaquin, Solano and Tulare counties.

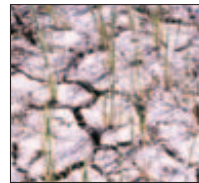
*Merced, Stanislaus and Tulare counties* were designated primary natural disaster areas due to losses caused by the combined effects of drought and abnormally cold temperatures that occurred during the period of Oct. 15, 2006, and continuing. Also eligible because they are contiguous are Alameda, Calaveras, Fresno, Inyo, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, San Benito, San Joaquin, Santa Clara and Tuolumne counties.

*Kern, Kings, Lake, Mariposa, San Luis*

*Obispo and Santa Barbara counties* were designated primary natural disaster areas due to losses caused by drought that occurred during the period of Oct. 15, 2006, and continuing. Also eligible because they are contiguous are the following counties: Colusa, Fresno, Glenn, Inyo, Los Angeles, Madera, Mendocino, Merced, Monterey, Napa, San Bernardino, Sonoma, Stanislaus, Tulare, Tuolumne, Ventura, Yolo.

Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses. According to John Smythe, California state executive director, FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability.

■ For more information, go to [www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA) and click on "Disaster assistance programs" in the menu bar on the left.



## VICTIM RELIEF:

Drought, not just January's freeze, makes California farmers eligible for disaster relief.

## State freeze help

**A**G Secretary A.G. Kawamura praised Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger for his commitment to provide disaster relief for workers and small businesses impacted by the disasters. The governor:

■ Awarded a \$2.5 million grant to assist farm workers in Tulare County who were laid off due to the January 2007 freeze.

■ Authorized the California Department of Housing and Community Development to release \$4 million in disencumbered Community Development Block Grant funds for January 2007 freeze victims.

■ Provided \$2 million in HOME funds for housing assistance.

■ Authorized \$3.25 million in emergency funding for rent, mortgage and utility payments. The funding was distributed to La Cooperativa.

■ Provided \$4.7 million in aid to food banks. The governor's May Revise includes an additional \$4.45 million for food banks.

■ Appropriated \$100,000 to the United Farm Workers Foundation.

■ Authorized local jurisdictions within 18 counties impacted by the extreme cold weather to redirect \$85 million in Community Development Block Grants and HOME funds.

■ Opened a total of 20 one-stop centers to provide essential services and programs.

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