



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

July 15, 2015

The Honorable Steve Bullock
Governor
State of Montana
Helena, Montana 59620

Dear Governor Bullock:

In accordance with 7 CFR 759.5(a), I am designating 15 Montana counties as primary natural disaster areas due to a recent drought. The primary counties included under this designation are:

Beaverhead	Glacier	Lewis And Clark	Missoula	Ravalli
Deer Lodge	Granite	Lincoln	Pondera	Sanders
Flathead	Lake	Mineral	Powell	Silver Bow

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor (see <http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>), these counties suffered from a drought intensity value during the growing season of: (1) D2 (Drought-Severe) for 8 or more consecutive weeks; or (2) D3 (Drought-Extreme) or D4 (Drought-Exceptional).

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

Broadwater	Jefferson	Meagher
Cascade	Liberty	Teton
Chouteau	Madison	Toole

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

Contiguous counties in an Adjacent State:

Idaho	(8)		
Bonner	Clark	Fremont	Lemhi
Boundary	Clearwater	Idaho	Shoshone

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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 loans. FSA considers each emergency loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of production losses on the farm, and the security and repayment ability of the operator.

Local FSA offices can provide affected farmers with further information.

Sincerely,


Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary