

# NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **FARM SERVICE AGENCY DESIGNATES COUNTIES IN CALIFORNIA AS AGRICULTURE DISASTER AREAS**

### ***Decision Allows Farmers and Ranchers to Apply for USDA Assistance***

WOODLAND, CA, November 5, 2003 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture has designated counties in California as primary agricultural disaster areas.

The following were designated on October 23, 2003 as primary disaster areas due to damages and losses caused by excessive rain and wheat stripe rust that occurred in Madera County (from January 1, 2003 through May 31, 2003); Yuba County (from March 14, 2003 through May 9, 2003); Sacramento County (from April 1, 2003 through May 8, 2003); Contra Costa (from April 1, 2003 through May 10, 2003); Alameda and San Joaquin Counties (from April 1, 2003 through May 15, 2003); Fresno, Kern and Tulare Counties (from April 1, 2003 through May 31, 2003); and Glenn County (from April 12, 2003 to May 23, 2003).

Also eligible because they are contiguous and experienced excessive rain and wheat stripe rust are the counties of Mariposa, Merced, Mono and Tuolumne (damage occurred January 1, 2003 through May 31, 2003); Butte, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sierra and Sutter Counties (damage occurred March 14, 2003 through May 9, 2003); El Dorado and **Yolo** Counties (damage occurred from April 1, 2003 through May 8, 2003); Solano County (occurred April 1, 2003 through May 10, 2003); Amador, Calaveras, Contra Costa, Sacramento, Santa Clara and Stanislaus Counties (damage occurred April 1, 2003 through May 15, 2003); Inyo, Kings, Los Angeles, Monterey, San Benito, San Bernardino, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties (damage occurred April 1, 2003 through May 31, 2003); and Butte, Colusa, Lake, Mendocino and Tehama Counties (damage occurred April 12, 2003 through May 23, 2003).

On October 30, 2003, four California counties received disaster declarations for spring rains and wheat stripe rust that occurred in Butte County (from March 1, 2003 through May 14, 2003); in Merced and Stanislaus Counties (from April 1, 2003 through May 14, 2003); and in Solano County (from April 1, 2003 through May 31, 2003).

Also eligible are the contiguous counties of Colusa, Glenn, Plumas, Sutter, Tehama and Yuba (damage occurred from March 1, 2003 through May 14, 2003); Fresno, Madera, Mariposa, San Benito, Santa Clara, Stanislaus and Tuolumne Counties (damage occurred from April 1, 2003 through May 14, 2003); Contra Costa, Napa, Sacramento, Sonoma and **Yolo** Counties (damage occurred from April 1, 2003 through May 31, 2003); and Alameda, Calaveras and San Joaquin Counties (damage occurred from April 1, 2003 through May 14, 2003).

On October 30, 2003, four more California counties received primary disaster declarations. These were El Dorado County for rain, hail and freezing temperatures that occurred from April 1, 2003 through March 14, 2003; Nevada County for rain, hail and freezing temperatures that occurred from March 1, 2003 through May 15, 2003; Sutter County for hail that occurred from April 4, 2003 through May 9, 2003; and **Yolo County for rain and wheat stripe rust that occurred from April 1, 2003 through May 15, 2003.**

Also eligible are the contiguous counties of Alpine, Amador and Sacramento (damage from rain and freezing that occurred from April 1, 2003 through May 15, 2003); Placer, Sierra and Yuba Counties (damage from rain and freezing that occurred from March 1, 2003 through May 15, 2003); Butte and Colusa Counties (for hail that occurred from April 4, 2003 through May 9, 2003); and Lake, Napa and Solano counties (rain and wheat stripe rust damage that occurred from April 1, 2003 through May 14, 2003).

These designations make all qualified farm operators eligible for low-interest emergency loans from the Farm Service Agency, provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for the loans to help cover part of their actual losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability.

In addition to the emergency loan program, USDA has also made other programs available to help eligible farmers and ranchers recover from adversity, including the Emergency Conservation Program, Federal Crop Insurance and the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). Interested farmers may contact their local FSA Service Centers for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs. Additional information is also available online at: <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>.

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