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Cantwell Announces Emergency Support for WA Farmers After 2011 Losses

15 counties given federal USDA disaster designation; farmers eligible for assistance for losses suffered from extreme weather

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) announced that farmers in 15 Washington state counties are now eligible to apply for emergency assistance and ongoing disaster assistance programs for losses suffered as a result of extreme weather conditions during the first seven months of 2011. Cantwell, along with Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), [wrote](#) Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack last August supporting Governor Chris Gregoire’s August 2nd request for immediate disaster designations stemming from the weather-related losses.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) designated Clallam, Clark, Franklin, Island, Jefferson, King, Kitsap, Klickitat, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Stevens, Wahkiakum, Whatcom, and Yakima counties as primary natural disaster areas. Farmers and producers in these areas are eligible to apply for USDA emergency assistance or aid.

“Many Washington state farmers suffered severe losses due to last year’s spring weather,” Senator Cantwell said. **“This disaster designation will help farmers recover and rebuild after last year’s losses. I encourage eligible farmers to take advantage of this disaster designation and apply for emergency assistance.”**

The losses in these counties were caused by the combined effects of excessive rain, flooding, below normal temperatures, high winds, frosts, and freezes that occurred during the period of January 1, 2011 through July 31, 2011. Tree fruits, vegetables, grapes, hay, and wheat were particularly impacted.

In addition to the 15 counties that have been designated as primary natural disaster areas, 20 counties have been named contiguous disaster counties: Adams, Benton, Chelan, Columbia, Cowlitz, Ferry, Grant, Grays Harbor, Kittitas, Lewis, Lincoln, Mason, Okanogan, Pacific, Pend Oreille, Pierce, Skamania, Spokane, Walla Walla, and Whitman. Farmers in both the primary and contiguous counties are eligible to be considered for assistance from the Farm Service Agency (FSA), as well as the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the Secretarial disaster declaration to apply for emergency loan assistance. Residents seeking more information should contact their local FSA offices.

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