



Florida Department of Agriculture
and Consumer Services

Charles H. Bronson
Commissioner

September 3, 2008

The Honorable Charlie Crist
Governor
State of Florida
The Capitol, Plaza Level 05
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Governor Crist:

As you know, Tropical Storm Fay inflicted significant damage on many counties throughout Florida as it slowly made its way across the state August 19 – 24, 2008. The excessive rainfall, flooding, flash flooding, high winds, lightning and multiple tornados the storm inflicted caused extensive damage to both the quality and quantity of many of our crops, as well as to the grazing pastures so critical to our livestock producers.

To date, thirty-six (36) of Florida's counties meet the threshold for a primary disaster declaration from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). For this reason, I would appreciate your requesting a primary county disaster declaration from USDA for the following counties: Alachua, Baker, Bay, Bradford, Brevard, Charlotte, Clay, Collier, Columbia, Dixie, Duval, Flagler, Gilchrist, Glades, Hamilton, Hendry, Highlands, Holmes, Indian River, Jefferson, Lee, Leon, Madison, Marion, Martin, Nassau, Okeechobee, Putnam, St. Johns, St. Lucie, Seminole, Suwannee, Union, Volusia, Wakulla and Washington.


I have corroborated these losses with USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Florida, and they agree that these counties meet the disaster declaration criteria. Due to the nature of the storm, significant amounts of standing water remain in some counties that do not currently meet the loss threshold for a declaration. If this situation continues, additional county requests may be forthcoming.

This request is consistent with the regulations governing USDA disaster declarations (7 CFR 1945.20) and must be received by the agency within three months of the qualifying disaster. It is my hope that given the amount of damage agriculture received, you will expedite this request so that our producers can begin to access much needed disaster relief.

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Thank you in advance for your support of Florida's agricultural producers. Should you need additional information related to this request, please do not hesitate to contact Leslie Palmer-Boxold in my office at 850-488-3022.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Charles H. Bronson in cursive script.

CHARLES H. BRONSON
COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE

CHB/ lp

cc: Jerry Curington, Office of General Counsel, Executive Office of the Governor
Rick Figlio, Office of General Counsel, Executive Office of the Governor
Carly Hermanson, Office of General Counsel, Executive Office of the Governor