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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DROUGHT DESIGNATION WILL HELP ENTIRE STATE

Starting this week farmers and ranchers in 11 Arizona counties can seek financial relief from the impact of the intense drought through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Despite the recent rainfall in the state, the threat of the drought continues to hang over Arizona's agricultural industry.

With this federal designation, farm operators and ranchers in Apache, Coconino, Greenlee, Mohave, Navajo and Yavapai counties – and neighboring counties of Cochise, Gila, Graham, LaPaz and Maricopa – are eligible to apply for low-interest emergency loans from the Farm Service Agency (FSA). The other four counties - Pima, Pinal, Santa Cruz and Yuma were eligible starting on February 27, 2014.

“This announcement is great news for Arizona farmers. The extreme drought creates a host of issues for our agricultural partners including significant land damage and financial losses,” said Jack Peterson, Interim Director for the Arizona Department of Agriculture. “No matter what the weather forecast is, we have a significant hill to climb to emerge from this drought.”

With the disaster designation, the USDA found that agricultural production losses in the counties were sufficient to warrant federal assistance. Eligible farm operators in the affected areas have eight months to apply for low-interest emergency loans from the FSA, at which time the agency will determine whether damages and production losses are sufficient to warrant the funding.

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