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Press Release



For Immediate Release

August 19, 2016

Contact:

Communications Office
(603)271-2121

U.S. Department of Agriculture Grants Governor Hassan's Request for Natural Disaster Designation for Farmers in 10 New Hampshire Counties

Declaration Makes Farmers in Primary and Contiguous Counties Eligible for Federal Aid

CONCORD – Governor Maggie Hassan today announced that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has granted her request for a Secretarial natural disaster designation for farmers of perennial fruit crops in Rockingham, Strafford, Hillsborough, Cheshire, Sullivan, Merrimack, Grafton, Coos, Carroll and Belknap counties.

"At the start of the 2016 growing season, farmers of perennial fruit crops in our state suffered widespread crop losses due to extreme cold in February and again in early April, following warming temperatures," Governor Hassan said. "It appears that nearly 100 percent of our state's peach crop was lost, and apples suffered significant losses as well due to this particular weather pattern. With this designation, the state and these communities will now be able to access critical federal dollars to aid in response efforts to the significant loss of crops. I thank Secretary Vilsack for heeding my request and for supporting New Hampshire's agriculture industry, which is critical to our economy and our way of life."

Belknap, Cheshire, Grafton, Hillsborough, Merrimack, Rockingham, Strafford and Sullivan Counties have been named as primary natural disaster areas, and Carroll and Coos Counties have been named as contiguous disaster counties. With the Secretarial disaster designation, farm operators in primary and contiguous counties are now eligible to be considered for assistance from the New Hampshire Farm Service Agency (FSA), including emergency loans.

The full letter of Governor's request is below. To view Secretary Vilsack's letter granting the Governor's request, visit https://filemanager.capwiz.com/filemanager/file_mgr/agdepartment/SignedCopy_10000045_NewHampshire.pdf and for more information on the latest list of counties on USDA's disaster assistance program, visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/index>.

In addition, [Governor Hassan also requested a drought declaration for three counties in New Hampshire](#), and this week the Merrimack, Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties reached the D3, Extreme Drought designation, fast-tracking Governor Hassan's request and automatically granting the request for the D3 designated counties.

May 13, 2016

Secretary Tom Vilsack
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

I write to formally request a Secretarial Disaster Designation for farmers of perennial fruit crops in seven of the 10 New Hampshire counties – Rockingham, Strafford, Hillsborough, Cheshire, Sullivan, Merrimack, and Grafton. There have not been as many reports for the other three counties – Coos, Carroll and Belknap, but we suspect more losses may become apparent in those counties as well.

At the start of the 2016 growing season, farmers of perennial fruit crops in our state suffered widespread crop losses due to extreme cold in February and again in early April, following warming temperatures. This particular weather pattern caused swelling and development of buds that were then highly susceptible to the freezing

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temperatures that followed. It appears that nearly 100 percent of our state's peach crop has been lost, and apples have suffered significant losses as well.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

With every good wish,

Margaret Wood Hassan
Governor

Cc: Lorraine Merrill, Commissioner, NH Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food

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