

Info Alert

National Conference of State Legislatures Office of State-Federal Relations

August 17, 2012

Earlier today, the United States Department of Agriculture provided a comprehensive update on the actions being taken by federal agencies in response to the drought. Some highlights of these actions include:

- USDA announced its intention to purchase up to \$100 million of pork products, up to \$10 million of catfish products, up to \$50 million in chicken products, and up to \$10 million of lamb products for federal food nutrition assistance programs
- Authorization to open nearly all of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) grassland acres for emergency haying.
- Reduction of USDA's Emergency (EM) Loan Rate from the previous rate of 3.75 percent to 2.25 percent.
- USDA has designated 1,628 unduplicated counties across 33 states as disaster areas—1,496 due to drought—making all qualified farm operators in the areas eligible for low-interest emergency loans.

USDA also noted that information on the current drought is updated frequently and all interested stakeholders are encouraged to check the agency's dedicated drought webpage often:

http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=DISASTER_ASSISTANCE

As always, if you have any questions or would like further information on the drought or actions taken by the federal government, please do not hesitate to contact NCSL staff [Ben Husch](#) (202-624-7779) or [Tamra Spielvogel](#) (202-624-8690).