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To:

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Subject: Gov. Nikki Haley tours farm, addresses statewide flooding damage

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Gov. Nikki Haley tours farm, addresses statewide flooding damage *Secretarial disaster declaration allows for low-interest emergency loans*

COLUMBIA, S.C. – Governor Nikki Haley toured Pendarvis Farms today to survey the damage caused by excessive summer rains and discuss the request for a Secretarial disaster designation from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The governor was joined by Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers, USDA Farm Service Agency State Executive Director Harry L. Ott, Jr., and South Carolina Farm Bureau representative Larry McKenzie.

Excessive rainfall this summer has been widespread across the state in almost every county, damaging crops currently planted and preventing new crops from being planted.

“The amount of rain this year has been disastrous for our farmers and the rain is impacting our economy as we speak. It’s times like these that we need to come together as a state and show the agribusiness community ‘we’re going to have your back,’” said Gov. Nikki Haley. “South Carolina farmers are the ultimate small business survivors – constantly fighting to bring food to our stores and earn a living. If there was ever a time that South Carolinians need to show support for local farmers, it’s now.”

36 counties have damage exceeding 30%, which mostly affected wheat, soybeans, cotton, forage crops, and peaches – known as primary disaster counties. The remaining 10 counties had damage below 30% but are included in the request as contiguous disaster counties.

Background –

Declaration request procedure:

- Farm Service Agency (FSA) county offices survey crop and structural damage county by county, and if the damage reaches above a 30% threshold, the FSA recommends to the governor that a disaster declaration request be made to the USDA.
- Director of the FSA sends a letter to the governor recommending that a USDA Secretarial disaster declaration request be made.
- The Secretarial disaster declaration allows affected farmers to apply for low-interest emergency loans.

Secretarial disaster declaration:

- This is the second Secretarial disaster declaration the governor has made this year. This first was in response to the tornadoes that struck Dorchester and Orangeburg counties.
- The Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to designate counties as disaster areas to make emergency loans (EM) to producers suffering losses in those counties and in counties that are contiguous to a designated county.

For more information:

http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/ed_desig_process2012.pdf

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