



STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA
M. MICHAEL ROUNDS, GOVERNOR

June 30, 2006

The Honorable Mike Johanns
Secretary of Agriculture
14th Street and Independence Avenue S.W., Room 200A
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Johanns:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Michael Rounds".

Many areas in the state of South Dakota are in their seventh consecutive year of drought. Counties are reporting shortages of grass and forage for livestock, due to the significantly below normal precipitation of the last seven years and inadequate soil moisture. This prolonged drought has also left dams and dugouts dry. These conditions have forced our producers to begin reducing their livestock herds. If our producers in South Dakota do not receive some sort of assistance in the very near future, I fear some will not be able to continue their family operations in the coming years.

To date, twenty-three South Dakota counties have issued agricultural disaster resolutions and have requested I declare them as state agricultural disaster areas. I intend to do so immediately and my letter and supporting documentation will be forthcoming. The counties are Brule, Buffalo, Campbell, Corson, Custer, Dewey, Edmunds, Fall River, Faulk, Hughes, Hyde, Jackson, Jerauld, Jones, Lyman, Meade, Pennington, Perkins, Potter, Stanley, Sully, Walworth and Ziebach.

In past years, the United States Department of Agriculture has been gracious enough to allow early haying of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres to allow our producers to take advantage of all available feed options. I am respectfully requesting you again allow for the haying of CRP acres (other than CP23) by July 10, 2006, in the twenty-three South Dakota counties which have issued agricultural disaster resolutions. The typical mowing date is August 1. Short-term weather outlooks indicate drought conditions are not likely to improve, and any feed value on the CRP acres may be lost by August 1.

In addition, I am requesting you allow for the immediate grazing of CP23 enrolled acres in the twenty-three South Dakota counties which have issued agricultural disaster resolutions. Some CP23 acres are intermixed within CRP fields, which preclude the landowner from grazing the

CRP if the CP23 areas are not fenced. The CP23 acres may also be the water source for livestock and would further exacerbate a landowner's ability to graze livestock on CRP without access to water from these areas.

Secretary Johanns, the actions I have described above will provide some much needed relief to South Dakota's livestock producers. I appreciate your serious and prompt consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Michael Rounds". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

M. Michael Rounds

MMR:nn

Cc: Senator Tim Johnson
Senator John Thune
Representative Stephanie Herseth