

Dawson County okayed for ag disaster status

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Gov. Dave Heineman was notified Tuesday that U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has approved his request for several Nebraska counties to be declared agricultural disasters following summer storm damage.

Nine Nebraska counties experienced sufficient crop damage resulting from summer storms and flooding to qualify for a Secretarial Disaster Designation. An additional 30 counties were designated as contiguous disaster areas.

“I appreciate Secretary Vilsack and USDA recognizing the impact heavy rain and winds have had on our producers this summer,” Gov. Heineman said. “This designation ensures that producers in affected areas have options available to help offset losses tied to storm damage.”

The nine counties included in the declaration include: Dawson County in central Nebraska; Box Butte, Cheyenne and Kimball Counties in western Nebraska; Boone, Boyd, Garfield and Holt Counties in the north central part of the state; and Johnson County in southeast Nebraska.

Contiguous counties include: Antelope, Banner, Buffalo, Custer, Dawes, Deuel, Frontier, Gage, Garden, Gosper, Greeley, Keya Paha, Knox, Lancaster, Lincoln, Loup, Madison, Morrill, Nance, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee, Phelps, Platte, Rock, Scotts Bluff, Sheridan, Sioux, Valley, and Wheeler.

Producers in primary and contiguous counties can apply for emergency assistance through their Farm Service Agency office. The Secretarial Disaster Designation is the first step in accessing various U.S. Department of Agriculture disaster assistance programs, including low-interest loans and the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program, or SURE. Farmers have eight months to apply for emergency loan assistance.