

Office of the Commissioner of Agriculture  
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**NEWS RELEASE**  
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## **HANCOCK COUNTY DESIGNATED CONTIGUOUS DROUGHT AREA**

**Charleston, WV** – The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) designated Hancock County as a contiguous disaster area due to a drought that occurred in 14 counties in Pennsylvania between May and December of 2016. The designation makes Farm Service Agency (FSA) emergency production loss assistance available for those farmers in Hancock County who suffered qualifying losses pursuant to section 321(a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act.

“It’s important Hancock County farmers impacted by last year’s drought seek assistance from the USDA in a timely manner. These monies will not be available forever, so we encourage those who were affected to take advantage of this assistance,” stated West Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt.

Farmers who meet the eligibility requirements have eight months from the date of declaration (April 5, 2017) to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses. The FSA will consider each loan application on its own merit, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. The FSA has a variety of programs in addition to the EM loan program to assist eligible famers recover from adversity.

Interested farmers may contact their local USDA service centers for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these programs. Additional information is available online at <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>.

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