

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE
Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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July 25, 2006

The Honorable Mike Johanns, Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
Administration Building, Room 100-A
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Johanns:

I am writing to request a Secretarial Disaster Designation for twelve counties in Washington State – Adams, Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Grant, Lincoln, Okanogan, Spokane, Franklin, Walla Walla, Whitman and Yakima.

This request is the result of adverse weather conditions that have impacted these counties. The dates of the impacts and crops affected vary by county. The enclosed document states the specific weather condition(s), inclusive dates of the events, crops impacted, and extent of the damage for each affected county.

Reports from the Farm Service Agency and the enclosed letter from Darin Michel, President of the Washington State Hay Growers Association, alerted me to these situations.

I would appreciate your earliest consideration of this request. An agriculture disaster designation will provide these counties with sorely needed low-interest loans. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Robert W. Gore, Deputy Director of the Washington State Department of Agriculture at 360-902-1810.

Sincerely,

Christine O. Gregoire
Governor

Enclosure

cc: Jim Mullen, Military Department, Emergency Management Division
Washington State Congressional Delegation
State Legislators in affected counties
County Commissioners in affected counties
Emergency Management Director in affected county
Valoria H. Loveland, Director, Washington State Department of Agriculture
State and local USDA, FSA Office in affected county



AFFECTED COUNTIES

- **Adams County:**

Adverse weather conditions, specifically excessive rain beginning May 15, 2006 and continuing, causing severe damage to hay.

- **Benton County:**

Adverse weather conditions, specifically hail, excessive rain, high winds May 17-June 10, 2006, causing significant damage to the first cutting of hay, probable damage to immature apples, and damage to cherries and onions.

- **Chelan County:**

Adverse weather conditions, specifically excessive rain, high winds and hail, flash flooding beginning June 9, 2006 and continuing, causing possible significant damage to peaches, nectarines, apricots, apples, pears and particularly cherries.

- **Douglas County:**

Adverse weather conditions, specifically excessive rain and hail beginning June 12, 2006 and continuing, causing possible significant damage to peaches, nectarines, apricots, apples, pears and particularly cherries.

- **Franklin County:**

Adverse weather conditions, specifically freezing weather May 2-3, 2006, extreme heat and excessive rain May 15-19, 2006, severe thunderstorms, excessive rain May 18, 19, and 23, causing moderate to severe damage to hay, asparagus, cherries, apples, and soft wood timber.

- **Grant County:**

Adverse weather conditions, specifically excessive rain, hail, and high winds beginning May 15, 2006 and continuing, causing possible severe damage to hay, cherries, apples and pears.

- **Lincoln County:**

Adverse weather conditions, specifically excessive rain, hail, flash flooding May 26-28, 2006 causing possible significant damage to wheat and barley. Beginning June 10, 2006 and continuing, excessive rain and hail - causing possible significant damage to wheat and barley.

- **Okanogan County:**

Adverse weather conditions, specifically excessive rain, hail and thunderstorms beginning June 8, 2006 and continuing, causing possible significant damage to apples, cherries, pears and hay.

- **Spokane County:**

Adverse weather conditions, specifically excessive rain, flash flooding, hail, high winds, lightning beginning June 10, 2006 and continuing, causing projected significant damage to peas, wheat, barley, lentils, and hay.

- **Walla Walla County:**

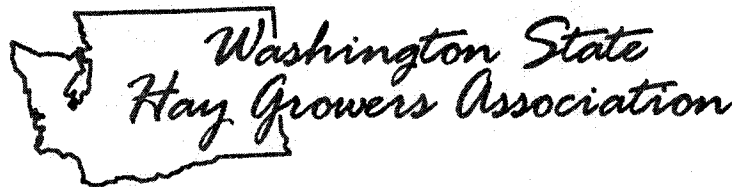
Adverse weather conditions, specifically freezing weather May 2-3, 2006, extreme heat and excessive rain May 15-19, 2006, severe thunderstorms, excessive rain May 18, 19, and 23, 2006 causing moderate to severe damage to hay, asparagus, cherries, apples, and soft wood timber. Beginning May 19, 2006 and continuing, hail and high winds - causing significant damage to farms impacted by this storm, specifically to apples, cherries, soft-wood timber, and hay.

- **Whitman County:**

Adverse weather conditions, specifically excessive rain, hail, high winds beginning May 19, 2006 and continuing, causing possible significant damage to garbanzo beans, dry peas, lentils, wheat, and hay.

- **Yakima County:**

Adverse weather conditions, specifically hail and excessive rain May 17-June 10, 2006 causing significant damage to the first cutting of hay and probable damage to immature apples.



June 7, 2006

Valoria Loveland, Director
Washington Department of Agriculture
1111 Washington Street S.E.
PO Box 42560
Olympia, WA 98504-2560

Dear Director Loveland:

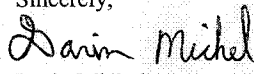
The Washington State Hay Growers Association is asking for your help in disaster assistance for this year's rained on hay.

As the current president of the Washington State Hay Growers Association, I would like to convey to you the following. As hay growers, we are at the mercy of the weather. 43% of our total tonnage of alfalfa and timothy comes off of first cutting which equates to 58% of our gross income for the year.

First cutting is of the most value to the dairies and the export markets as it will bring \$15-\$20/ton more than any other cutting as long as it is not rained on. Once rained on the value drops from \$130.00/ton to \$70.00/ton. Breakeven prices for a medium size hay operation are \$98.00/ton in 2006. On a smaller operation the breakeven will be much higher due to the inability to take advantage of economies of scale. Rained on hay lowers the overall tonnage for the year and will also delay getting the hay off the field in order to grow another cutting, which compounds the situation. So rained hay has a huge effect on our bottom line and dramatically lowers our ability to replace equipment or pay bills which support our local and states economies.

As of this date 70% of the hay in the Columbia Basin and the Yakima Valley area is rained on. What hasn't been rained on in the windrow will be in Bloom which lowers its value to what we call feeder hay - -which is basically a product that sells below our breakeven price.

We would appreciate any assistance in getting some relief for our growers. I can be reached at (509) 989-2000 if you wish to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

Darin Michel
President

DM:sdn