

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 3, 2008

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GOVERNOR CULVER, SECRETARY NORTHEY REQUEST IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF CONSERVATION RESERVE LANDS

*Send Letter to US Secretary of Agriculture to request
immediate release of lands covered by Conservation
Reserve Program for haying and grazing*

DES MOINES – Today, Governor Chet Culver and Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey sent a letter to US Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer requesting that lands currently covered by the Conservation Reserve Program be released for haying and grazing.

In recent weeks, Iowans have experienced one of the worst natural disasters in our nation's history. Since the severe weather began on May 25th with the EF5 tornado that struck Parkersburg and New Hartford, Governor Culver has issued a disaster proclamation for 86 counties – 77 of which have been declared a Presidential Disaster Area.

Both the corn and soybean crop have been affected by delayed planting, slow development due to excess moisture and lost acres that have been drowned out. The result has been an estimated \$4 billion in damages. In addition, Iowa's livestock industry has been affected both directly by the floodwaters, and indirectly as the first hay cutting has been delayed, grazing lands have been lost and feed prices have risen significantly.

Below is the text of Governor Culver and Secretary Northey's letter to the US Secretary of Agriculture.

Dear Secretary Schafer:

Weather this year is challenging grain and forage production in Iowa. Recent estimates have found that fifteen percent of Iowa's hay and pasture acreage has been flooded and will be unavailable for haying and grazing purposes. High grain prices are also putting pressure on livestock producers.

Eighty-six of Iowa's ninety-nine counties are currently declared as disaster areas. Our livestock producers are struggling. We must make sure that there are adequate hay and pasture acreage available for beef and dairy producers.

We appreciate your willingness to open up the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) after the nesting season; however, August 1st is too late for our livestock producers. We respectfully ask you for an immediate, one-time statewide release of CRP acres for haying and grazing purposes, based upon the historically unprecedented flooding in Iowa.

Releasing this acreage will guarantee that our producers are able to stay in production while ensuring we have the safest, most plentiful and affordable food supply in the world.

Thank you for the consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Chet Culver

Governor

Bill Northey

Secretary of Agriculture

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