



**CHARLIE CRIST**  
GOVERNOR

January 15, 2010

The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary  
United States Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW Room 200-A  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

Florida's weather has again caused losses for our agricultural producers. Beginning on January 2, 2010, Florida experienced some of the coldest temperatures ever recorded. Thirteen consecutive days of sustained hours of below freezing temperatures resulted in a tremendous amount of damage to agricultural products throughout the entire state. Preliminary assessments indicate that all of Florida's sixty-seven counties will meet the damage threshold for a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretarial Emergency Disaster.

No sector of agriculture appears to have been spared. Citrus, sugarcane, nursery crops, tropical fish, sweet corn, tomatoes, snap peas, strawberries, blueberries, peppers, avocados, mangos and oats are some of the crops that appear to have sustained significant damage.

Florida Commissioner Charles Bronson, of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, has corroborated these losses with the United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency in Florida, and they agree that the widespread damage necessitates a disaster declaration for the entire state. It is my hope that you will expedite the request so that our producers can begin to access much needed disaster relief.

Thank you in advance for your support of Florida's agricultural producers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charlie Crist".

Charlie Crist

cc: Charles H. Bronson, Commissioner

CC/hlj  
Enclosure

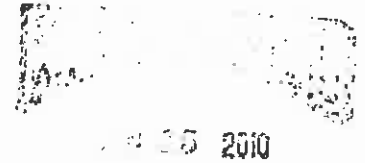


Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services  
CHARLES H. BRONSON, Commissioner  
The Capitol • Tallahassee, FL 32399-0800  
www.doacs.state.fl.us

Please Respond to:

January 14, 2010

The Honorable Charlie Crist  
Governor  
State of Florida  
The Capitol, Plaza Level 05  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399



Dear Governor Crist:

General & Legal Office

As I know you are aware, beginning on January 2, 2010 and continuing through today, Florida has been experiencing some of the coldest temperatures ever recorded in the state. I am grateful for the speed at which you signed the Executive Order lifting truck weight limits that enabled our agricultural producers to harvest at risk crops quickly to mitigate some of the crop damage. Unfortunately, the thirteen consecutive days of sustained hours of below freezing temperatures resulted in a tremendous amount of damage to agricultural production throughout the state. Preliminary assessments indicate that all of Florida's sixty-seven (67) counties will meet the damage threshold for a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretarial Emergency Disaster Declaration.

The depth and breadth of the damage will continue to be seen in the days ahead but already I am receiving troubling reports of some areas being completely wiped out. In addition, for some of the crops that can be harvested, significant quality issues may be an issue. No sector of Florida agriculture appears to have been spared. Citrus, sugarcane, nursery crops, tropical fish, sweet corn, tomatoes, snap beans, strawberries, blueberries, peppers, avocados, mangos, and oats are just some of the crops that appear to have sustained significant damage.

For this reason, I would appreciate your requesting a primary county disaster declaration from USDA for all Florida counties. I have corroborated these losses with USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Florida and they agree that the widespread damage necessitates a disaster declaration for the entire state. This request is consistent with the regulations governing USDA disaster declarations (7 CFR 1945.20) and must be received by the agency within three months of the qualifying disaster. I know that given the amount of damage, you will expedite this request so that our producers can begin to access much needed disaster relief.

Thank you in advance for your support of Florida's agricultural producers. Should you need additional information related to this request, please do not hesitate to contact Leslie Palmer-Boxold in my office at 850-488-3022.

Sincerely,

CHARLES H. BRONSON  
COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE



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