



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

January 8, 2016

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
14th Street and Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

Texas agricultural producers have been greatly affected by the severe winter weather which began on December 26, 2015, in the Texas Panhandle. As an example, losses of cattle are currently estimated at more than 25,000 head. While damage assessments and economic losses are still being calculated, daily operations have ceased as producers have been occupied by efforts to reclaim displaced cattle, dispose of deceased cattle, and measure operational losses.

The State of Texas is requesting the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to expeditiously consider a disaster designation in the following counties: Bailey, Castro, Cochran, Deaf Smith, Hale, Hockley, Lamb, Lubbock, Parmer, Terry and Yoakum.

A USDA disaster designation would make federal assistance, such as emergency loans, available to producers who have suffered losses in the above counties as well as in counties that are contiguous to a designated county. The severe winter storm produced damaging weather conditions which substantially affected producers causing severe production losses. These producers are in need of this assistance to return to normal operations.

Thank you for your continuous support of the Texas agriculture industry and consideration of this request for a disaster designation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Abbott".

Greg Abbott
Governor

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sid Miller".

Sid Miller
Commissioner of Agriculture