

# TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

TODD STAPLES  
COMMISSIONER



August 25, 2011

Dear Commissioner/Secretary/Director of Agriculture:

As Texas continues to suffer through the worst drought in a single year on record, ranchers are desperately struggling to feed their livestock. Thankfully, we have experienced kindness, generosity and tremendous support from our friends in other states who have been blessed with rain and significant supplies of hay. Today, I write to thank you for your support and ask for your urgent assistance in two important matters.

The first issue is regarding hay transportation regulations. At my request, Governor Rick Perry directed the Texas Department of Transportation to waive permit requirements for over-sized hay loads being transported across the state. This waiver will serve to expedite the movement of hay to livestock in desperate need. The states of Alabama, Kansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and South Dakota have already enacted similar waivers. I respectfully ask for your assistance in securing similar approval from your state's regulatory authority and have enclosed a sample letter for your convenience.

Secondly, I have heard from agriculture producers throughout the country who have ample grazing land or hay available. The Texas Department of Agriculture has modernized our hay hotline website ([www.gotexan.org/HayhotlineHome.aspx](http://www.gotexan.org/HayhotlineHome.aspx)) to better coordinate efforts to buy, sell or donate hay. The site also allows hay transport companies to post information on transportation services and allows landowners to post available grazing land. I ask that you to publicize the Texas Hay Hotline in your state to help facilitate the transfer of resources among our producers, transporters and landowners.

My staff is pleased to share templates for press releases and to coordinate our efforts with similar initiatives in your state. Please contact Lance Williams at (512) 475-1615, or by email at [Lance.Williams@TexasAgriculture.gov](mailto:Lance.Williams@TexasAgriculture.gov), for additional details.

I cannot stress enough the dire circumstances impacting our producers. Many farmers and ranchers are facing unprecedented hardships, and Texas sincerely asks for your support to help sustain the agricultural operations and food supplies upon which American consumers rely.

Sincerely yours,

Todd Staples

Enclosure

TS/NC/nc



August X, 2011

Dear (appropriate authority):

With historic drought conditions in Texas and parts of the southwestern United States, I request you review the appropriate rules within our state to ensure on a temporary basis that hay transporters can haul hay shipments of at least 12-feet wide and 14-feet high on highways throughout the state without special permitting. This may require the issuance of a temporary blanket waiver to suspend permitting requirements for round hay bales and associated permitting fees for carriers transporting oversized loads of hay.

The suspension of permitting requirements for transporting hay will be instrumental in assisting livestock producers throughout the country to efficiently acquire and transport hay they desperately need to continue operating until conditions improve. This will also aid our state's hay producers in getting their product to this important market.

Thank you for your work on behalf of agriculture and on-going attention to drought and wildfire issues. Please contact me if I may provide additional information or assistance with the request.

Sincerely,