



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures

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Emergency Disaster Programs for Response to the Drought

Drought conditions are tracked and modeled nationwide through the United States Drought Monitor program. Drought intensity categories are based on five key scientific indicators, and reports from a consortium of expert observers throughout the country. San Luis Obispo County has been in the D4 – Exceptional Drought classification since February 18, 2014. D4 is the highest, most severe designation.

On January 15, 2014 the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued a natural disaster declaration for multiple California counties with San Luis Obispo County designated as a primary county. The declaration was based on data from the Drought Monitor program. The USDA Farm Service Agency uses the disaster declaration to release and distribute federal funds and emergency loans through a variety of programs to help minimize the negative long term business impacts that result from natural disasters such as drought.

To date, staff at the USDA Farm Service Agency office in Templeton has received hundreds of applications for drought losses for 2013 and 2014 totaling nearly \$6 million in payments. The emergency disaster programs administered by the Farm Service Agency are included in the current US Farm Bill. This indicates the availability of funds will likely continue through 2018. For more information, contact the local FSA office at 805-434-0398 EXT 2.

The U.S. Small Business Administration has low-interest federal disaster loans available to offset economic losses to businesses dependent on farmers and ranchers. The Economic Injury Disaster Loans help businesses meet financial obligations and operating expenses which could have been met had the drought not occurred. For more information contact the Small Business Administration's Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955.