

February 28, 2006 Drought aid available to farmers

For Immediate Release

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Johnstown, PA - U.S. Rep. John Murtha has announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture has designated 23 Pennsylvania counties as natural disaster areas due to sustained sufficient production losses caused by drought that occurred from May 1, 2005, to the present.

This designation makes farm operators in both primary and contiguous counties eligible to be considered for low-interest emergency loans from the Farm Service Agency, provided that eligibility requirements are met. According to the FSA, each application will be considered on its own merit by taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability.

All nine counties in the 12th Congressional District made the designation list. Armstrong, Fayette, Greene and Washington counties are considered primary disaster areas. Allegheny, Cambria, Indiana, Somerset and Westmoreland are considered contiguous disaster counties.

Local FSA offices throughout Western Pennsylvania can provide affected farmers with additional information regarding the loans.