



The official website of the Governor of Massachusetts

**Governor**  
**Deval Patrick** in Governor's Office 

<a href="#">The Administration</a>	<a href="#">Constituent Services</a>	<a href="#">Press Office</a>	<a href="#">Agenda</a>	<a href="#">Legislation &amp; Executive Orders</a>	<a href="#">Get Involved</a>
------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------------	--	------------------------------

[Home](#) > [Press Office](#) > [Press Releases](#) >DEVAL L. PATRICK  
GOVERNORTIMOTHY P. MURRAY  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR**Media Contact**Alex Goldstein  
Heather Johnson  
Alec Loftus  
617-725-4025Lisa Capone (EEA)  
617-626-1119

For Immediate release - September 23, 2011

**PATRICK-MURRAY ADMINISTRATION SECURES FEDERAL RELIEF FOR MASSACHUSETTS FARMERS IN 11 COUNTIES**[Information about federal disaster assistance programs](#)

BOSTON - Thursday, September 22, 2011 - Governor Deval Patrick today announced that United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack has granted the Commonwealth's request for federal disaster relief in 11 Massachusetts counties that suffered agricultural production losses due to heavy rain and strong winds from Tropical Storm Irene in August.

Farms in Berkshire, Bristol, Essex, Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire, Middlesex, Norfolk and Worcester counties, which were declared primary natural disaster areas, are now eligible for loans and other assistance from the United States Farm Services Agency (FSA), provided that individual farms meet eligibility requirements. In addition, farms in Plymouth and Suffolk Counties, which were declared contiguous disaster areas, are eligible for loan assistance.

"This is great news for our farmers," said Governor Patrick. "The Obama Administration has come through for Massachusetts, and the people of Massachusetts again, and I really appreciate that."

Governor Patrick sent a letter on September 16, 2011 to Secretary Vilsack requesting the disaster designation.

"We thank the Obama Administration and our congressional delegation for providing this critical resource, which will help restore and recover the agricultural economy in impacted communities," said Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray.

A secretarial disaster designation makes farm operators in both primary and contiguous counties eligible to be considered for assistance from the FSA, provided eligibility requirements are met. This assistance includes FSA emergency loans and the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of a secretarial disaster declaration to apply for emergency loan assistance.

"Massachusetts farms were pounded by the torrential rains and intense winds from Hurricane Irene and they're still struggling with the aftermath. They need this help," said U.S. Senator John Kerry. "Every penny counts, especially at a time when some in Washington are actually fighting against disaster relief."

"This assistance is sorely needed by Massachusetts farmers who are struggling to recover from the destruction caused by Tropical Storm Irene," said Congressman John Olver. "It is another step in the right direction, and I will continue to work with the House Bipartisan Hurricane Irene Coalition to help make funds available for recovery."

"These funds are important to farmers impacted by Tropical Storm Irene," said Congressman Stephen F. Lynch. "Hopefully, this will make a difference for farmers who are struggling to recover."

During the storm, heavy rain and strong winds knocked down power lines and caused severe flooding inundating fields and farm facilities. Crops were also affected by salt spray, wind damage and flooding.

"Farmers across the state will now have access to resources that will help them recover from significant crop damage caused by this storm," said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Richard K. Sullivan Jr., whose office includes the Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR).

"I applaud the efforts of the Patrick-Murray Administration in securing this needed funding," said Representative Anne Gobi, House Chair of the Joint Committee on the Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture. "This funding will assist farmers of the Commonwealth to avoid significant revenue loss and continue to meet the needs of the citizens of Massachusetts."

"The Commonwealth's agricultural economy, which represents \$500 million in annual revenue, was deeply affected by this year's unprecedented storms. This is welcome assistance for our farmers, who will use the help to save jobs and continue their operations," said DAR Commissioner Scott Soares.

"I am pleased that the United States Farm Service Agency has made these funds available," said Senator Marc R. Pacheco, Chairman of the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture. "I am encouraged that the Patrick-Murray Administration has been successful in securing needed funds for those in our farming sector that have been substantially impacted as a result of Hurricane Irene."

The FSA will consider each farm's application based on the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. Local FSA offices can provide affected farmers with further information regarding available assistance.

###

Follow us on [Twitter](#) - View our - Watch our [Videos](#)