

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Territory's Farmers Eligible For More Drought-Related Assistance

VIC News / **Published On October 14, 2015 04:15 PM /**

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ST. CROIX -- Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture Acting Commissioner Carlos Robles announced via press release today that the territory has qualified for additional assistance for livestock farmers here who have been adversely affected by the drought.

Secretary of Agriculture Thomas J. Vilsack in an August 26, 2015 letter, designated this island as a primary natural disaster area, according to the release. The declaration made farm operators eligible to be considered for certain assistance from the USDA Farm Service Agency (USDA-FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met, it further stated.

Recently, DOA was informed that because of the combined efforts of the Veterinary Services team and the local and regional offices of the USDA-FSA, the Virgin Islands has qualified not only for low interest loans for farmers, but also for two additional programs: the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) and the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFDP).

The LIP provides benefits for eligible livestock farmers for livestock deaths caused by adverse weather. The LFDP provides benefits to eligible livestock producers that have suffered grazing losses on land that is native or improved pastureland with permanent vegetative cover, or is planted specifically for grazing.

Mr. Robles encouraged all livestock farmers here who have suffered loss of animals and loss of pasture grasses to contact the Farm Service Agency office and make an appointment to see if they are eligible for assistance, according to the release.

"This is a very unique opportunity for livestock farmers to recoup some of the losses they suffered during the drought," Mr. Robles said.

For more information call the USDA Farm Service Agency at 340-773-9146 ext. 2