

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (R-FL 13) announced today that farmers in Hardee, DeSoto, and Charlotte counties may be eligible for federal disaster assistance. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has declared a natural disaster in six Florida counties, making farm operations in those counties and 15 contiguous counties eligible to apply for low-interest emergency loans from the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

“Several months of dry, sunny, and breezy conditions have caused drought conditions in much of Florida,” said Buchanan. “The drought has forced many farmers in my District to cut back on watering resulting in significant crop damage. Florida growers help provide a safe and adequate food supply. I applaud Governor Crist for seeking and the USDA for approving a disaster designation to help area farmers struggling with production losses and encourage area growers to apply for this much-needed assistance.”

The FSA will consider loans based on the farmer’s losses, security available, and repayment ability. A disaster was declared for Highlands, Jefferson, Lafayette, Madison, Okeechobee, and Taylor counties. Additional contiguous counties eligible to apply for assistance are Dixie, Gilchrist, Glades, Hamilton, Indian River, Leon, Martin, Osceola, Polk, St. Lucie, Suwannee, and Wakulla.