

NEWS RELEASE

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ARKANSAS AGRICULTURE SECRETARY REQUESTS ASSISTANCE FOR FARMERS

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LITTLE ROCK –LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Secretary of Agriculture Butch Calhoun has requested the assistance of United States Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack in helping farmers in Arkansas and nearby states who had commodity contracts to sell grain to Turner Grain Merchandising Inc. (Turner Grain) and have not yet received payment for the delivered grain.

Secretary Calhoun requested an additional extension of time for producers delivering their Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) grain under a CCC-681-1, Marketing Authorization, to Turner Grain. In addition, he also asked that U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) make low-interest emergency loans available to affected producers.

Turner Grain of Brinkley has recently defaulted on payments and contracts to area farmers, leaving some producers faced with economic uncertainty. Reports from producers and various media outlets estimate losses as high as \$50 million.

Extending the time period for USDA loans and the availability of low-interest emergency loans would allow these producers an opportunity to get back on their feet while complicated legal claims are resolved. A similar request for an extension has been made by the Arkansas House and Senate Interim Committees on Agriculture, Forestry, and Economic Development

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Questions regarding this press release may be directed to Zachary Taylor, Director of Marketing, at 501-219-6324 or email Zachary.Taylor@aad.ar.gov.