



STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of Governor Tim Walz

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155-1611

November 7, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
U.S Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue Southwest
Suite 200A
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As the Governor of Minnesota, I understand the importance our agricultural sector. Agriculture is crucial to our state's economy and the backbone of our rural communities. We rank 5th in the nation in agricultural production and have over 68,000 farming operations. When our agricultural community struggles, our state struggles. That is why I am writing to ask for your assistance.

In recent years, farmers in the Midwest have faced numerous challenges and Minnesota producers are no exception. From low commodity prices, to uncertainty around trade, farmers have struggled to find stable, profitable markets for their crops. These challenges have only become more acute with the severe weather conditions plaguing our state. Our producers are hardworking, but due to extreme weather conditions, many were unable to harvest their crop this fall. Commodities Minnesota is known for including sugar beets, potatoes, soybeans, sunflowers, edible beans and wheat have been victim to flooding, disease, and freezing temperatures. The unrelenting and unprecedented weather patterns are producing poor yields and causing crops to rot in the field.

Widespread flooding in the spring caused delayed planting across Minnesota putting many crops behind schedule from the start. Record rain and snow in October resulted in surplus soil moisture every week of the month. Fields became unworkable and impassable, with equipment getting stuck in the field, or plugged up from excess soil. While most of the wheat has been harvested, record rain falls in September resulted in quality loss factors such as sprout damage, low falling numbers, mold, and mildew. Soybean harvest is well below the five-year average and with snow and freezing temperatures in the forecast, what crops are left in the field will be very difficult to harvest. Minnesota is well below the 95% five-year average for sugar beets and the early freeze at the end of October ended most of the potato harvest in the Red River Valley. Crop failure here affects the potato crop of the entire country so this loss will have cascading effects on potato prices next year.

Our farmers need relief, so I am formally requesting that a Secretarial Disaster Designation be issued for the counties of Polk, Clay, Norman, Marshall, Pennington, Lake of the Woods, Kittson, Roseau, Red Lake, Wilkin, Becker, and Mahnomen. Northwest Minnesota needs access to federal aid to recover and endure the effects these losses will have in the coming years.

We appreciate your consideration and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. J. Walz". The signature is stylized with a large initial "T" and a prominent "J".

Tim Walz
Governor