



United States Department of Agriculture

Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services
Risk Management Agency

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TO: Phyllis W. Honor
Acting Administrator

FROM: Michael R. Moore /s/ *Michael Moore*
Director

SUBJECT: Regional Irrigation Assessment for Valdosta Region

This Regional Irrigation Assessment is being provided in accordance with instructions in the Loss Adjustment Manual (LAM) Standards Handbook, FCIC 25010. The Regional Office Director is required to share information about areas suspected of having inadequate water for irrigation with insurance providers operating in the region.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is involved in managing the quality and quantity of water through its relationship with the state's five water management districts (WMD) Northwest Florida WMD, Suwannee River WMD, St. Johns River WMD, South Florida WMD and Southwest Florida WMD, and the adoption and implementation of The Florida Water Policy and The Florida Water Plan.

Chapter 373, Florida Statutes, gives the Department "general supervisory authority" over the districts and directs the Department to delegate water resources programs to them where possible.

Pursuant to these delegations, the districts are authorized to administer flood protection programs and to perform technical investigations into water resources. The districts are also authorized to develop water management plans for water shortages in times of drought and to acquire and manage lands for water management purposes under the Save Our Rivers program. Regulatory programs delegated to the districts include programs to manage the consumptive use of water, aquifer recharge, well construction and surface water management.

The South Florida Water Management District currently has established specific water-use restrictions according to the severity of the water shortage - PHASE I, **moderate**; PHASE II, **severe**; PHASE III, **extreme**; PHASE IV, **critical** - each requiring an increasingly larger reduction in water use. Water-use



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restrictions generally apply to water from private wells, and all surface waters such as canals, lakes, ponds and rivers.

The South Florida Water Management District currently has imposed water-use restrictions in designated areas. Large areas in the district currently have PHASE II restrictions and there are limited areas that have PHASE III restrictions for surface water agricultural use. Additionally, there are other limited areas that have termination of surface water use designations.

Due to these restrictions insureds in the below identified Florida counties may be facing water shortages due to the drought conditions currently being experienced in these areas.

Dade, Broward, Glades, Hendry, Martin, Palm Beach, Okeechobee and St Lucie

The insured crops grown in these counties which may be affected by the suspected shortage of irrigation water source are fresh market beans, fresh market sweet corn, fresh market tomatoes, nursery, peppers, potatoes, rice, and sugarcane. Nursery has been targeted due to the availability of accepting new insurance policies or increases to inventory values through May 31.

Information concerning the state's five water management districts and any water-use restrictions can be located on the Web at <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/org/watman/>.

Additionally, on March 1, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) formerly declared a “severe drought” within the Flint River Basin of southwest Georgia. This formal declaration activates the Flint River Drought Protection ACT. The ACT is designed to protect stream flow levels in the Flint River during severe drought. The ACT established a fund to compensate farmers who voluntarily suspend agricultural acreage from irrigation during a severe drought year. Georgia EPD announced that the recent acceptance of bids from 209 permits will result in the suspension of irrigation on over 33,000 acres of farmland this year. The ACT applies only to surface water irrigation in the Flint River Basin and does not apply to groundwater wells because EPD has not yet fully determined the impact of groundwater irrigation on the Flint River. Even though EPD has implemented the ACT, due to recent rainfall events in the area, no counties in the Flint River Basin have been identified by the Valdosta Region as suspect of inadequate water for irrigation.

At this time no other areas in the Valdosta Region other than as specified in this assessment have been identified as suspect of having to inadequate water for irrigation.