



June 26, 2008

The Honorable Ed Schafer  
Secretary  
United States Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Secretary:

On behalf of the members of the National Association of Wheat Growers, I urge you to make payments, including estimated or partial advanced payments, as quickly as possible under the Supplemental Disaster Assistance Program passed as part of the 2008 Farm Bill.

Many farmers across the United States are facing catastrophic crop losses combined with historically unprecedented increases in input costs, and the new supplemental program would help provide important relief to producers already facing crop disasters for the 2008 crop year.

As with any disaster, timing of payments is critical for producers to maintain their operations. One benefit of the supplemental program - and one reason NAWG members supported its inclusion in the 2008 Farm Bill - is that it is intended to provide quick assistance to producers who need it. However, current indications from the Department are that payments cannot be made under this program until 2009, after final season averages are released for the 2008 crop year.

USDA has a long history, starting during the 1980s farm crisis, of issuing advanced payments for disaster assistance; the Department has also issued advanced payments for counter-cyclical payments based on price forecasts for the season. I urge you to take advantage of tools like the World Agriculture Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) numbers to make estimated, or at least partial, payments under the Supplemental Disaster Assistance Program as soon as possible.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

David Cleavinger

President