



Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets
116 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-2901

Office of the Secretary

Joan Goldstein
Chief Executive Officer
Vermont Economic Development Authority
60 Main Street, Ste 202
Burlington, VT 05401

October 21, 2025

Dear CEO Goldstein,

We write to respectfully request that the Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA) consult with the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (AAFM), the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD), and the Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation (FPR) to determine that Vermont agricultural businesses should have access to VEDA's Disaster Recovery Loan Fund to help recover from the drought disaster.

Vermont is experiencing severe drought (D2) in every county and extreme drought (D3) in eleven counties. See U.S. Drought Monitor (<https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>). After a wet spring that made field access and planting difficult, Vermont's short growing season has been nearly without rain and conditions are drier than in decades. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, June was dry (.56 inches below the mean), July was extremely dry (27th driest on record since 1895), and August was the driest it has been in at least 130 years. The lack of rain has continued, and the drought is projected to persist. As of the October 14, 2025 weekly report, approximately 96% of the state was in severe (29%) or extreme (67%) drought. Our current Drought Severity and Coverage Index (DSCI) is the highest (worst) in the nation, and this is the first "extreme" drought in 25 years.

The prolonged dry weather has emptied wells and streams and ponds and rivers are extremely low. Farms are trucking water for livestock, vegetable and fruit crops are severely diminished, pasture is dry or dead, maple, fruit, and Christmas trees are stressed, corn and hay are stunted, depleted, or nonexistent, feed is reduced and in short supply, and bees are suffering from the lack of nectar and pollen.

The drought is damaging farms, and to compound the challenges, many farmers are still recovering from severe flooding during the last two growing seasons, which destroyed crops and fields and led to distinct disaster designations each year. Farmers continue working tirelessly to feed us, but they are struggling to absorb the significant costs of successive natural disasters. As we approach winter, the drought-related losses for this year are essentially fixed, and will not be recovered or mitigated before the next growing season. The lack of feed and the broad-based production losses will continue jeopardizing farms and causing financial harm throughout Vermont.

Heavy annual losses of food, feed, and other agricultural products can devastate farms and compromise our regional food system and food security. Farm viability is critically important. Because of the extreme drought, the United States Department of Agriculture issued a disaster designation for 6 Vermont counties, which impacts 12 counties because of contiguous county coverage. If the federal government was operating, we believe all 14 counties would now be a designated disaster area (or at least contiguous to one), and all Vermont farmers would be eligible for federal relief. Unfortunately, because of the shutdown, USDA's disaster recovery loans and programs are not currently available to Vermont farmers. Farmers in all Vermont counties are affected by the drought, and we believe it essential that eligible farms have access to disaster relief.

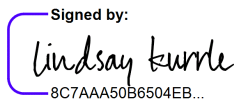
We very much appreciate your important work to mitigate the impact of natural disasters on farms. Severe and extreme drought conditions are causing significant losses and VEDA's assistance could be invaluable. If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Signed by:


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Anson Tebbetts

Secretary
Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

Signed by:


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Lindsay Kurrle
Secretary
Agency of Commerce and Community Development

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Danielle Fitzko
Commissioner
Department of Forest, Parks, and Recreation