



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE
LESTER SPELL, JR., D.V.M.
COMMISSIONER

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For Immediate Release

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Commissioner Lester Spell announces new drought assistance program

Lester Spell, Mississippi's Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce, announced today that Mississippi catfish producers who were adversely affected by disasters in 2005, 2006 or 2007 will be able to qualify for assistance. The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) has been designated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to disburse the Catfish Grant Program, which will provide assistance funding to eligible catfish producers who were adversely affected by drought related conditions. "Due to the significant losses across Mississippi from adverse weather conditions, USDA has granted the State of Mississippi assistance for Mississippi's catfish producers. Significant increases in feed costs and cost associated with lost feeding that affected all Mississippi catfish producers during prolonged drought periods from 2005 through parts of 2007, and this program will help these producers offset some of the costs they faced," said Spell.

Catfish producers in all Mississippi counties will be eligible for the Catfish Grant Program due to USDA's 2005 through 2007 Presidential and Secretarial drought designations. Applications will be available through local feed mill providers, their local county FSA office, and on the MDAC website at <http://www.mdac.state.ms.us>. Producers participating in the program have must return their applications to MDAC by November 19, 2007. Those producers having questions concerning the program should contact the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce at 601-359-1100.

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