

AFBF Estimates 3.6M Ag Acres Hit by Floods

WASHINGTON, D.C., May 23, 2011 – After learning firsthand from state Farm Bureaus about recent flooding devastation in the southern United States the American Farm Bureau Federation now estimates that nearly 3.6 million acres of farmland has been impacted by the natural disaster. On a Farm Bureau nationwide call late last week, states also reported an estimated 40 percent of this year's rice crop has been affected.

Arkansas topped the list with a million acres affected, including 300,000 acres of rice and 120,000 acres of wheat. Illinois was estimated to have 500,000 acres of farmland under water, with Mississippi and Missouri coming in at 600,000 and 570,000 acres, respectively. Tennessee reported 650,000 acres and Louisiana was pegged at 280,000 acres.

“There is no doubt about it, the effect of the flooding on farmers and ranchers is being felt deeply across the south,” said AFBF Chief Economist Bob Young. “One is reminded of the '93 or '95 floods in terms of scale of affected area.”

But, said Young, it's critical that the government acts quickly to rebuild the levees and allow producers to make plans for the future.

“In many of these areas, agriculture is the major economic driver for the region,” said Young. “While some may be able to get a crop in the ground this year, we need to also think about the long-term economic health of these farms and communities.” Without the levees in place to protect homes and farms however, it may be hard to make those investments, added Young.