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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON

June 30, 1953

file

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Dear Mr. President:

During my trip into the drought-stricken areas of the Southwest, I found that the spirit of the people is very high and completely unbroken despite the great hardships they are facing. It is only because of their independence and great courage that they have not requested Government aid heretofore. The conditions in that area are really much worse than I had anticipated.

I met with fourteen Texas delegations, representing the west Texas area, during my stay in Lubbock. They have been through almost four years of continuous drought - the last normal month of rainfall for the area was in September, 1950. I also met with delegations from Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Kansas. All reported their areas were equally affected. Reports indicate that New Mexico and a few counties of Colorado are also badly off. But the situation is especially critical in the western parts of Texas and Oklahoma, and the governors of both states have already asked that you declare the area a disaster.

The delegations recommended: (1) that we grant them emergency feed assistance and/or provide means of moving their cattle to feed, (2) that we provide credit to enable them to hold their foundation stock and to carry any obligations they have on their acreage, (3) that they get some relief from freight rates, and (4) that any program we advance stress action through already established insututions, either public or private.

We are formulating a credit program to meet the needs of the area for the livestock people and the cotton and wheat farmers. We have announced today a buying program for distressed cattle in the drought areas to be canned as beef and gravy for use in the school lunch program. We already have had assurances from the railroads that they will give a fifty per cent freight rate reduction on shipment of feed into the disaster areas.

We are giving the drought situauon top priority, and will keep you informed of developments.

Faithfully yours,

E. J. Brown
Secretary

The President
The White House

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