

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
 2           An act relating to agricultural disaster assistance;  
 3           amending s. 570.249, F.S.; expanding the conditions under  
 4           which loan funds to certain agricultural producers may be  
 5           granted; increasing the maximum amount of a loan;  
 6           providing definitions; providing an appropriation;  
 7           providing an effective date.

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 9   Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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 11           Section 1. Subsection (1) of section 570.249, Florida  
 12           Statutes, is amended to read:

13           570.249 Agricultural Economic Development Program disaster  
 14           loans and grants and aid.--

15           (1) USE OF LOAN FUNDS.--

16           (a) Loan funds to agricultural producers who have  
 17           experienced ~~crop~~ losses from a natural disaster or a  
 18           socioeconomic condition or event may be used to:

19           1. Restore, ~~or~~ replace, or remove debris from essential  
 20           physical property, ~~such as animals, fences, equipment,~~  
 21           ~~structural production facilities, and orchard trees,~~

22           2. Pay all or part of production costs associated with the  
 23           disaster year. ~~†~~

24           3. Pay essential family living expenses. ~~† and~~

25           4. Restructure farm debts.

26           (b) Funds may be issued as direct loans, or as loan  
 27           guarantees for up to 90 percent of the total loan, in amounts

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28 | not less than \$30,000 nor more than \$300,000 ~~\$250,000~~.

29 | Applicants must provide at least 10 percent equity.

30 | (c) For purposes of this subsection, the term:

31 | 1. "Losses" means crop loss or damage to an agricultural  
32 | facility or infrastructure or farmworker housing owned by an  
33 | agricultural producer.

34 | 2. "Essential physical property" means animals, fences,  
35 | equipment, structural production facilities, other agricultural  
36 | facility or infrastructure or farmworker housing owned by an  
37 | agricultural producer, and orchard trees.

38 | Section 2. The sum of \$50 million is appropriated from the  
39 | General Revenue Fund to the General Inspection Trust Fund within  
40 | the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for fiscal  
41 | year 2006-2007 for the purpose of providing loan funds under s.  
42 | 570.249, Florida Statutes, to agricultural producers who  
43 | experienced losses during the 2005 calendar year.

44 | Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2006.