



NEWS RELEASE

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\$48 MILLION IN USDA SUGAR BEET DISASTER PROGRAM PAYMENTS BEGIN TODAY

WASHINGTON, Nov. 17, 2003 -- Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced that \$48 million in payments to about 3,000 producers begin today under the Sugar Beet Disaster Program. The program, authorized by the Agricultural Assistance Act of 2003, provides payments to producers who suffered sugar beet losses in either 2001 or 2002 due to a natural disaster.

Although up to \$60 million was authorized for the program, the total eligible payments to producers who signed up is \$48 million. No payment factoring was required in determining calculations for eligibility.

Producers will receive payments based on the highest of the following three options:

Option A: 60 percent of the producer's crop insurance indemnity.

Option B: 65 percent of the producer's expected production *minus* the producer's actual production *times* 55 percent of Multi-Peril Crop Insurance price election (\$36 a ton for 2001 and \$33 a ton for 2002).

Option C: 100 percent of the producer's expected production *minus* the producer's actual production *times* \$12.50 per ton.

In addition, the sum of the sugar beet crop's value, the net crop insurance indemnity and the sugar beet disaster payment cannot exceed 100 percent of the value of expected production.

Sign-up for this program began Sept. 15 and ended Oct. 31, 2003. To be eligible, producers must have sustained at least a 35 percent loss in sugar beet production in either the 2001 or 2002 crop years. Applicants with losses in both years will receive payments for the year in which the larger loss occurred.

More information on Agricultural Assistance Act programs is available at local Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices and on FSA's Web site at: <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov/>.

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