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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-SECOND SESSION

H. F. No. 4812

04/21/2022

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The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Agriculture Finance and Policy

1.1 A bill for an act

1.2 relating to agriculture; appropriating money for grants and financial assistance to

1.3 livestock farmers and specialty crop producers impacted by drought; appropriating

1.4 money to the Rural Finance Authority revolving loan account for drought relief;

1.5 appropriating money for veterinary diagnostic laboratory equipment; appropriating

1.6 money for transfer to the agricultural emergency account; requiring reports.

1.7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.8 Section 1. DROUGHT RELIEF; APPROPRIATION.

1.9 (a) \$7,000,000 in fiscal year 2022 is appropriated from the general fund to the

1.10 commissioner of agriculture for the purpose of providing grants and other forms of financial

1.11 assistance to livestock farmers and specialty crop producers impacted by the drought in

1.12 2021. For the purposes of this section, "specialty crop" means an eligible crop under the

1.13 United States Department of Agriculture's specialty crop block grant program. Of the amount

1.14 appropriated in this paragraph:

1.15 (1) \$5,500,000 is for livestock farmers; and

1.16 (2) \$1,500,000 is for livestock farmers or specialty crop producers. Of the amount

1.17 appropriated in this clause, up to \$100,000 may be used to reimburse livestock farmers for

1.18 expenses not reimbursed through the United States Department of Agriculture Emergency

1.19 Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-raised Fish (ELAP) program, at a rate of

1.20 \$6.60 per mile used in obtaining or transporting feed or feed ingredients up to 25 miles to

1.21 and from the farm.

1.22 The commissioner may issue payments of up to \$5,000 on a first-come, first-served,

1.23 noncompetitive basis. Eligible producers must be located in counties that were designated

2.1 as a primary natural disaster area by the United States Department of Agriculture between
2.2 July 20, 2021, and December 31, 2021. In order to receive a payment, a recipient must sign
2.3 an attestation of the value of the loss suffered due to drought. Grants must be limited to the
2.4 value of the loss or \$5,000, whichever is less. Beginning January 10, 2023, and annually
2.5 thereafter until January 10, 2025, the commissioner must report on the utilization of the
2.6 grants under this paragraph to the legislative committees with jurisdiction over agriculture
2.7 finance. The report must include a breakdown of grants by type of farm, either livestock or
2.8 specialty crop, and by county. Any unencumbered balance at the end of the year does not
2.9 cancel and is available until June 30, 2024. This is a onetime appropriation.

2.10 (b) \$1,500,000 in fiscal year 2022 is appropriated from the general fund to the Rural
2.11 Finance Authority revolving loan account established under Minnesota Statutes, section
2.12 41B.06, for drought relief loans under Minnesota Statutes, section 41B.047. If this
2.13 appropriation exceeds the total amount for which all farmers are eligible in a fiscal year,
2.14 the balance of the appropriation is available for other programs eligible for funding under
2.15 the Rural Finance Authority's revolving loan account. Beginning January 10, 2023, and
2.16 annually thereafter until January 10, 2025, the commissioner must report activities and
2.17 expenditures under this paragraph to the legislative committees and divisions with jurisdiction
2.18 over agriculture finance. Any unencumbered balance at the end of the year does not cancel
2.19 and is available until June 30, 2024. This is a onetime appropriation.

2.20 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.

2.21 **Sec. 2. APPROPRIATION; VETERINARY DISEASE TESTING EQUIPMENT.**

2.22 \$1,000,000 in fiscal year 2022 is appropriated from the general fund to the commissioner
2.23 of agriculture for a grant to the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota to purchase
2.24 equipment for the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory to test for chronic wasting disease,
2.25 African swine fever, avian influenza, and other animal diseases. The Veterinary Diagnostic
2.26 Laboratory must report expenditures under this section to the legislative committees with
2.27 jurisdiction over agriculture finance and higher education with an initial report completed
2.28 by January 3, 2023, and a final report by September 1, 2023. The reports must include a list
2.29 of equipment purchased including the cost of each item. This is a onetime appropriation
2.30 that is available until June 30, 2023.

2.31 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.

3.1 Sec. 3. **APPROPRIATION; AGRICULTURAL EMERGENCY ACCOUNT.**

3.2 (a) \$500,000 in fiscal year 2022 is transferred from the general fund to the agricultural
3.3 emergency account in the agricultural fund under Minnesota Statutes, section 17.041. This
3.4 is a onetime transfer.

3.5 (b) Notwithstanding Minnesota Statutes, section 17.041, the commissioner may spend
3.6 money from the agricultural emergency account for the purposes of avian influenza testing
3.7 supplies, including but not limited to poultry drinking water tests. This paragraph expires
3.8 on December 31, 2022.

3.9 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.