

Office of the Governor

PO BOX 004
TRENTON, NJ 08625

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Jayne O'Connor
Wendi Patella
609-777-2600

RELEASE: June 22, 1999

Governor Whitman Requests Federal Assistance for Southern New Jersey Farmers

Gov. Christie Whitman today asked the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to declare three southern New Jersey counties an agricultural natural disaster area following severe weather last month.

The May 24 storms brought severe hail, rain, and heavy winds to Atlantic, Camden, and Gloucester counties. About 5,767 acres on 54 farms sustained damage of up to 99 percent of the crops. If the area is declared a natural disaster by the Department of Agriculture, the farmers in the three counties would be eligible for emergency loans from the USDA and for the Farm Service Agency's farm credit programs.

"The effects of one bad storm on our farmers cannot be underestimated," Gov. Whitman said. "Many of these farmers lost nearly all of their crops at a time when they were most vulnerable. The federal natural disaster declaration will go a long way towards helping these farmers survive a difficult season."

The USDA's State Emergency Board has reviewed damage reports from the storm and recommended the agriculture natural disaster declaration.

