



South Carolina  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

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Hugh E. Weathers, Commissioner

November 7, 2024

The Honorable Henry D. McMaster  
Governor, State of South Carolina  
South Carolina Statehouse  
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Governor McMaster:

I write to you on behalf of the many South Carolina farmers and agribusiness owners who for the past six months have suffered greatly from the effects of a severe drought, Tropical Storm Debby and, most recently, Hurricane Helene.

During the last few months, I have traveled extensively throughout the state, talking to farmers and agribusiness owners, surveying the vast damage to farms and agricultural infrastructure. Sadly, the message in every region of the state has been the same – *“We need help!”* As I have committed to each farmer, we will leave no stone unturned in seeking help for those affected by these multiple disasters, which have led to destroyed crops, infrastructure and depressed crop yields and prices.

In 2024, South Carolina farmers experienced nearly \$621 million (breakdown below) in damages, much of which is not covered by crop insurance or any permanent federal government program. Because of this, our industry has been in direct conversations with our congressional delegation discussing ad-hoc supplemental disaster assistance, hopefully as a direct block grant to the state, so those affected may be able to quickly receive assistance already provided to small businesses and homeowners.

<b>Hurricane Helene:</b>	\$65.3 Million: Crop and Livestock Loss
	\$193 Million: Agricultural Infrastructure Loss
	\$194 Million: Timber Loss
<b>Tropical Storm Debby:</b>	\$133.2 Million: Crop and Livestock Loss
	\$4.7 Million: Agricultural Infrastructure Loss
<b>Drought:</b>	\$31.3 Million: Crop and Livestock Loss

Because each of these disasters did its worst damage in a different part of the state, a large number of the more than 22,000 farms in South Carolina have been affected.

With this letter, I hereby request the state’s full response efforts to assist farmers, including an official request for Congressional supplemental aid to assist with uninsured losses.

The Honorable Henry D. McMaster  
November 7, 2024  
Page 2

This year has proven devastating for farmers. Even the best crop insurance policy is not structured to cover these types of catastrophic events. While farmers are extremely resilient, there is a limit to their capacity to bounce back and keep on farming without support following unprecedented losses.

As you have never once wavered in your support for South Carolina's farmers I hope we collectively will work to preserve and strengthen our state's largest industry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hugh E. Weathers" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Hugh E. Weathers

Encl: South Carolina Agriculture 2024 Damage Assessment  
South Carolina Forestry 2024 Damage Assessment