

August 9, 2005

The Honorable Matt Blunt
Governor of Missouri
State Capitol Building
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

Dear Governor Blunt:

As you read this letter our state is virtually baking in the summer heat. Drought conditions are hitting nearly every county in Missouri, particularly Senatorial District 16, and our farmers are suffering from it. Unfortunately, the drought's impact will not end when the weather breaks, but will extend beyond this winter and for years to come.

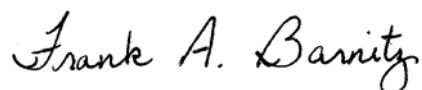
The prices of corn, beef and most likely soybeans has the possibility of being higher than they have been before. The first hay harvest only produced about one-third of normal yields. With continuing high temperatures, low humidity and lack of rain the outlook for a second cutting of hay for winter feed is grim; it likely will not be made. More urgently, there is no feed for the remainder of the summer because Missouri's hay fields are almost completely burned up. Many farmers are feeding their winter supply of hay now and have been for over a month. Farmers expect to be out of winter feed as early as November. This leaves farmers facing a tough choice: either import hay from other states, which is very expensive and sends revenue outside our state, or sell their cattle. These kinds of decisions are what can run a family farmer out of business in a hurry.

Corn and hay crops are already in very poor condition, and soybeans are right behind them due to record-breaking drought conditions. Farm Service Agency (FSA) representatives recently stated that a six-county region, including Cole, Miller, Morgan, Moniteau, Osage and Maries counties, is expected to see a revenue loss of nearly \$30 million. Between 2002-2003, Missouri lost 3,000 farming operations; with prices of products and services increasing, I am sure even more farmers are being forced to give up their family farms.

You should know that Missouri farmers do appreciate all the help you are trying to find for the family farm, but the hard fact is that low interest loans is not the kind of help our farmers need. We need livestock and crop assistance programs that effectively offset the loss felt by the drought. With skyrocketing fuel prices, land prices and the tax burden that farmers shoulder, it is all that a typical Missouri farmer can do just to stay afloat. Many farmers have no extra money for more payments, even on low-interest loans. Missouri's farmers need real help from you, and they need it now. Farmers work hard year after year to feed the people of Missouri and the United States. Now I believe it is the Missouri farmer's turn to be helped us through these tough times. To make this very clear this letter serves as our formal request for federal feed assistance.

Thank you for carefully considering this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Frank A. Barnitz". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of a vertical red line.

Frank A. Barnitz
State Senator
District 16