



GOAL 4

Maintain a safety net of emergency relief that emphasizes sound stewardship of natural resources and self-help.

The Commission recognizes that over time, efforts at drought preparedness, including risk management, can greatly reduce, but not eliminate, drought-related emergencies. Response measures for drought emergencies can also be useful to respond to water shortages not caused by drought. In all cases where emergency response is required, it should be effective and timely.

Specific Recommendations

- 4.1 Congress should authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to borrow from the Commodity Credit Corporation to implement the Department of Agriculture's emergency programs.
- 4.2 Congress should amend the appropriate U.S. Department of Agriculture's emergency programs to include livestock needs during drought.
- 4.3 The Department of Agriculture should establish a single procedure to trigger, in a timely fashion, all of the Department's disaster programs.
- 4.4 We recommend that emergency assistance acknowledge, encourage, and reward natural resource stewardship and self-help without discriminating against those truly in need.
- 4.5 We recommend that Congress enact permanent authorization for Title 1 of Public Law 102-250, which gives the Bureau of Reclamation authority to provide emergency drought assistance. Because the Bureau's authority is limited to the Reclamation states, Congress should extend that authority or provide appropriate authority to the Army Corps of Engineers to serve the non-Reclamation states.

- 4.6 For those areas not covered by the Stafford Act, Congress should appropriate an annual fund, available until expended and similar to that available under the Stafford Act, for non-farm drought emergencies that affect tribes, communities, businesses, and the environment.

GOAL 5

Coordinate drought programs and response effectively, efficiently, and in a customer-oriented manner.

Federal drought programs are a collection of initiatives run by different departments and agencies. Every analysis of past responses to major droughts notes that these programs need to be better coordinated and integrated. We strongly agree. In accordance with our policy statement, we emphasize that coordination of federal drought programs should ensure effective service delivery in support of nonfederal drought programs.

Federal drought programs are a collection of initiatives run by different departments and agencies. Every analysis of past responses to major droughts notes that these programs need to be better coordinated and integrated.

Specific Recommendations

- 5.1 **Create Council.** The President should immediately establish an interim National Drought Council through an executive order and in combination with a Memorandum of Understanding that provides adequate staffing and funding. Congress should create a long-term, continuing National Drought Council. Both should be composed of federal and regionally diverse nonfederal members (see the table on the next page