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### **PENCE PRAISES DROUGHT RELIEF PLAN**

*Says plan targets those in need and stays within budget*

**Washington, Feb 13, 2003** - WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Congressman Mike Pence today praised conferees for reaching agreement on agricultural disaster relief that is offset in other areas of the federal budget. The plan provides \$3.099 billion in assistance to agricultural producers most affected. On Monday, Pence urged conferees to adopt a common sense approach to drought relief.

“In the past, disaster relief simply added to federal spending and failed to reach those most in need,” said Pence. “For the first time in history an agricultural disaster assistance package is offset in other areas of the federal budget and targets those most in need. Since weather-related disasters are not limited to certain regions of the country or specific crops, it only makes sense to target those most affected with the greatest aid.

“By using this targeted approach, the plan will help those with the greatest need and ensure fiscal responsibility,” said Pence.

The Agricultural Disaster Assistance Package includes:

- \$2.115 billion of targeted disaster relief for crop producers to assist producers who have sustained greater than a 35% loss in either 2001 or 2002.
- \$365 million in assistance to livestock producers.
- \$250 million in emergency surplus removal for specialty crops to partially replenish funds in their LCP program.
- \$54 million in payments to tobacco producers for losses associated with quota reductions, pests, and diseases.

- \$50 million of cottonseed assistance to compensate for losses to the cottonseed industry resulting from hurricanes.
- \$120 million in assistance to sugar producers to compensate for damages due to flooding, drought, and hurricanes.
- \$15 million in Bovine Tuberculosis Eradication.
- \$70 million in funding for Administration of Farm Bill and Disaster.

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