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## United States Senate

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September 6, 2006

Mr. Eldon Gould  
Administrator  
United States Department of Agriculture  
Risk Management Agency  
1400 Independence Ave., SW  
Stop 0801  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Administrator Gould:

Over the past several years Colorado has faced extreme, ongoing drought conditions, and many hardworking farmers and ranchers are fast running out of options that will allow them to continue operating on their lands. For farmers and ranchers across eastern Colorado these conditions have been exacerbated by the fact that over 200 farmers had their irrigation wells shut off by government officials after they had planted their fields. Their crops have died, and now it appears that they will have little federal crop insurance to cover these overwhelming losses.

It is my understanding that the Risk Management Agency (RMA) has instructed crop insurance providers to cover losses only on crops irrigated with water that the farmers were guaranteed before the planting season. Unfortunately, many of the farmers had already planted their crops when the wells were shutdown, and with Colorado's extreme drought conditions, this resulted in these farmers not being able to raise their crop. These farmers had no way to anticipate that their wells would be completely shut off this season, and without the coverage that they had anticipated from their crops insurance program, farmers and their rural communities across eastern Colorado will be devastated.

In this regard, I am pleased to hear that several RMA representatives will be traveling to Colorado on September 12 to meet with the Commissioner of Agriculture, the State Engineer, the Central Colorado Water Conservancy District (CCWCD) and several affected producers. It is extremely important that RMA programs, which are designed to help our farmers, operate in a fair and farmer-friendly manner.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your action on this urgent issue.

Sincerely,



Ken Salazar  
United States Senator