

# The Columbus Dispatch

Thursday, July 26, 2012

## Kasich offers farmers help

By [Joe Vardon](#)

The state's annual celebration of agriculture comes at a time when Ohio farmers could really use some help.

Gov. John Kasich and family helped launch the 2012 Ohio State Fair with a ceremonial ribbon-cutting yesterday morning, and after lunch he signed an executive order at the fairgrounds intended to ease the costly effects of a summer drought on farmers.

As part of the order, the state will ask the U.S. Agriculture Department to declare a drought emergency in Ohio, which would open up federal assistance for farmers, mostly for loans to cover crop losses, as well as permission to cut hay from land marked for conservation.



Kasich's order enables farmers to cut hay from highway rights of way adjacent to their properties "where feasible, safe, and without inconveniencing the traveling public." It also directs the Ohio Department of Agriculture to help farmers mitigate drought damage in a number of ways, such as developing a website that tracks hay availability.

"It's a terrible time for Ohio farmers," Kasich said. "There's going to be a lot of loss, it's tragic. These farmers, they sometimes scrape by year to year, and this one could knock them out." Kasich said 52 percent of Ohio's crops are rated "either poor or very poor," and 90 percent of the topsoil contains inadequate moisture to grow crops. David T. Daniels, the state's agriculture director, said rain levels are 9 inches below normal in some areas. Daniels said Ohio hasn't seen these kinds of drought conditions since 1988, "so a lot of people have not lived through this kind of a dry spell before." Farmers throughout the parched Midwest are struggling with triple-digit heat, and little relief is expected soon.

Article continued here: <http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2012/07/26/kasich-offers-farmers-help.html>

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