

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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FEED GRAIN FOR INDIAN LIVESTOCK IN SOUTHWEST DROUGHT AREAS

The Federal Government has moved to protect Indian-owned livestock in Indian grazing areas of the southwest through joint action by Secretary of the Interior Rogers C.B. Morton and Agriculture Secretary Clifford M. Hardin for the release of feed grain by the Commodity Credit Corporation.

The livestock affected are in numerous counties of Arizona and New Mexico that have been declared drought disaster areas, and in San Juan County, Utah. The CCC today authorized feed grain distributions to tribes owning the livestock.

Interior's request to Agriculture stated: "Hundreds of thousands of Indian-owned livestock are without sufficient forage, feed and water in areas that have been officially declared drought-disaster areas in the southwestern United States. Most of the Indians who own these livestock are dependent upon them as the primary source of subsistence and income.

"The majority of individual Indian livestock owners are financially unable to independently secure the feed necessary to assure survival of their foundation breeding herds through the unpredictable duration of the prevailing drought conditions."

Secretary Hardin explained: "The grain donation is authorized under the Agricultural Act of 1949 which gives the President the authority to determine that a disaster area exists for purposes of federal aid. A subsequent Executive Order of March 1967, applying specifically to Indians, delegates to the Secretary of Agriculture authority to declare Indian reservations acute distress areas."

Commissioner of Indian Affairs Louis R. Bruce has been authorized by Secretary Morton to take all necessary steps to enable the Indians to use the free grain available through CCC. The Navajo, Phoenix, and Albuquerque area offices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs have been instructed to inform the director of the Kansas City Commodity Credit Corporation of specific orders for grain transmitted by the various affected Indian tribes. The tribes are to pay costs of processing and of local distribution from several central points of CCC delivery.

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