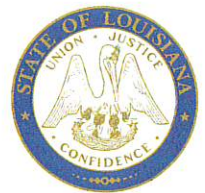




LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY  
MIKE STRAIN DVM  
COMMISSIONER



February 28, 2024

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack: *Tom*

As a follow-up to my letter to you on February 2, 2024, I want to provide you an update as several weeks have passed. I have heard from and visited with many in the crawfish industry during this time and the current condition of the crawfish industry in Louisiana is one in need of immediate assistance.

The drought in 2023 was one of the most severe droughts in the history of our state and caused significant damage to the sustainability of the crawfish industry. Lack of water, and in some cases saltwater intrusion, decimated the seed stock and has limited the ability to catch crawfish. As you may recall from my previous correspondence, according to the LSU AgCenter, preliminary estimates of crop loss and damages exceed \$1,690,213,000. Preliminary damages to the crawfish industry are estimated at over \$139,830,000. The crawfish industry is directly responsible for over \$250,000,000 in our state economy and is a deep part of our cultural heritage.

Mardi Gras 2024 was still celebrated, but this time without abundant and affordable crawfish. For the first time in many years, due to sustained drought in 2023 and freezing temperatures in early 2024, crawfish are simply unavailable.

Economic loss to our farmers and farm economy cannot be overstated as many will have lost their entire crop and supply chain to provide for the restaurant and consuming public.

Therefore, I respectfully ask that you use your powers as Secretary to expand the Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP) to include drought as a cause of loss for the crawfish industry.

On behalf of Louisiana, anything you can do to provide immediate assistance to this important industry is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

*Mike Strain*  
Mike Strain, DVM  
Commissioner

Cc: The Louisiana Congressional Delegation  
The Honorable Jeff Landry, Governor of Louisiana



# LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY

MIKE STRAIN DVM

COMMISSIONER



February 2, 2024

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack: *Tom*

In 2023, Louisiana endured one of the most severe droughts in the history of our state. According to the LSU AgCenter, preliminary estimates of crop loss and damages exceed \$ 1,690,213,000. Preliminary damages to the crawfish industry are estimated at over \$139,830,000. The crawfish industry is directly responsible for over \$ 250,000,000 in our state economy and is a deep part of our cultural heritage.

We normally begin fishing in late November and celebrate Mardi Gras with abundant and affordable crawfish. This year is an exception. For the first time in many years, due to sustained drought in 2023 and freezing temperatures in early 2024, crawfish are simply unavailable.

More concerning is the fact that we currently estimate that as many as 120,000/360,000 acres of production will be devoid of crawfish suitable for harvest as they perished in the drought. The economic loss to our farmers and farm economy cannot be overstated as many will have lost their entire crop and supply chain to provide for the restaurant and consuming public.

In addition to farmed losses, the wild-caught industry, which normally supplies around 6% of the catch, is also in peril as much of the swamps and estuaries simply dried up during the drought.

Therefore, I respectfully ask that the ELAP and/or a similar program be properly funded and instituted to assist our farmers and fishers. Further, we must protect our native industries and not allow or facilitate a flood of imports which will further destabilize our industry.

I have no doubt that you will do everything in your power to assist. I would like to emphasize the urgency of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Strain".

Mike Strain, DVM  
Commissioner

Cc: The Louisiana Congressional Delegation  
The Honorable Jeff Landry, Governor of Louisiana