

USDA allocates \$21 mil. to help farmers battle drought

By Matt Stevens, Los Angeles Times

A branch of the U.S. Department of Agriculture will provide \$21 million to help farmers and ranchers in California and other states install new irrigation systems, plant cover crops and implement other water conservation practices, officials said Monday.

The funds, made possible by the 2014 farm bill, will be distributed to the most severely drought-stricken areas of eight states, as determined by the U.S. Drought Monitor.

It is not clear how much of the money will go to California, but in a call with reporters, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said the state has already received more than \$27 million from the Natural Resources Conservation Service for drought management practices this fiscal year.

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