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## **Columbia County Board of Supervisors**

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FROM: Columbia County Board of Supervisors Chairman Matt Murell

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

### **May Freeze Prompts USDA Disaster Designation**

Columbia County Board of Supervisors Chairman Matt Murell said today that Columbia County is among seven upstate New York counties and the states of Massachusetts, Vermont, and Connecticut that have been included in a USDA declaration for crops damaged from May 2023 frost. The remaining six New York counties are Clinton, Dutchess, Essex, Rensselaer, Suffolk and, Washington.

Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the July 21 disaster declaration to apply for emergency loans. The USDA's Farm Service Agency considers each emergency loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of production losses on the farm and the security and repayment ability of the operator.

For production losses, a 30% reduction in a primary crop in a designated or contiguous county is required for loan eligibility. Losses to quality, such as receiving a 30% reduced price for flood damaged crops, may also be eligible for assistance.

Mid-May freezing was responsible for a number of Hudson Valley area apple orchards being damaged. Some suffered complete fruit loss, while others experienced significant impacts to quality. The May 18 frost in some cases broke longstanding records and significantly affected a number of other crops.

Visit: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/emergency-farm-loans/index> for additional information on emergency FSA loans.

Also, there is a local FSA office located in the Columbia County Soil & Water building, 1024 Route 66, Ghent.