



South Carolina DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Hugh E. Weathers, Commissioner

Media Contact:

Clint Leach, 803-734-2191, jcleach@scda.sc.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – September 13, 2017

Farmers Currently Assessing Crop Damage After Hurricane Irma

(Columbia, SC) – As initial damage assessments and cleanup begin after Hurricane Irma’s impact on South Carolina, farmers throughout the state hope to experience minimal crop damage and infrastructure loss. With the mere size of Hurricane Irma, a large portion of the state’s 25,000 farmers may be negatively impacted.

All farmers who have experienced losses are encouraged to contact their Clemson University County Extension agent, to complete an official ESF-17 Damage Assessment Form.

“Early reports indicate somewhat minimal crop losses, but ultimately time will tell. With localized rains, flooding and heavy winds, a large part of farmers’ recovery will depend on how quickly fields drain and when crops can be harvested,” said South Carolina Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers. “Unlike after Hurricane Joaquin in 2015, it appears this week’s forecast will help farmers quickly get back into the fields.”

Hurricane Irma’s timing coincides with the harvest of many crops, including peanuts, cotton and fruits and vegetables. Many farmers are also preparing their fields for fall planting. Farmers experienced a \$375 million loss of crops in 2015 from Hurricane Joaquin and another \$52 million in 2016 from Hurricane Matthew.

“Farmers are very resilient, but having already experienced tremendous crop losses the past two years, we hope for a very quick recovery,” Commissioner Hugh Weathers says.

South Carolina agribusiness is the state’s largest industry, contributing nearly \$42 Billion and 212,000 jobs to the state’s annual economy

###