WASHINGTON, Feb. 24--Senator Strom Thurmond (D-SC) today urged the U. S. Department of Agriculture to extend coverage under the Emergency Feed Program to hogs, poultry, and farm work stock. At the same time, the South Carolina Democrat asked that a peach crop insurance program be set up and that drought-stricken farmers be given additional time to apply for assistance under the feed program.

Thurmond met with Kenneth L. Scott, chairman of the department's special drought committee, today to discuss additional coverage under the drought aid program.

During the meeting, Thurmond emphasized the severe drought conditions that have plagued the state for the past two years. He pointed out a number of South Carolina farmers are still in need of drought assistance, especially under the feed program.

Thurmond requested that Scott re-open the application period for feed assistance. The deadline date was February 15. The South Carolina senator pointed out a number of South Carolina farmers were not aware of the cutoff date and thus need additional time to file their applications.

In speaking of extension of the assistance to hog and poultry producers, Thurmond told Scott these two large farm industries in South Carolina have been severely hit by the drought but have received no benefits under the feed program. He also emphasized the plight of small farmers with work stock who also are not eligible for assistance under the program.
"This," Thurmond said, "is where we need the help most—with the small farmers and sharecroppers who have been almost wiped out by the drought and the lack of feed."

Peach growers were also given a boost by the Senator when he asked that the department establish a crop insurance program to guard against freeze losses. In speaking of the peach industry in South Carolina, Thurmond said:

"Our peach crop is important to our agricultural economy in South Carolina. We now produce the second largest output of peaches of any state in the nation, and crop insurance should help protect this vital industry against undue losses."

Thurmond said South Carolina tobacco farmers have been pleased with a similar insurance program. Last year they paid $141,000 in premiums and collected more than $300,000 for drought losses.

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