

NEWS STATEMENT BY SENATOR STROM THURMOND (D-SC) on DISASTER AID TO  
SOUTH CAROLINA PEACH GROWERS, MARCH 16, 1955

Washington, D. C., March 16, 1955--The U. S. Department of Agriculture today assured Senator Strom Thurmond that South Carolina's tornado-stricken peach growers will receive every possible assistance from the Department.

At the same time, the Department agreed to send representatives to meet with South Carolina peach growers soon to discuss the possibilities of developing a peach crop insurance program to guard against future disasters and crop freezes.

Kenneth L. Scott, Agriculture Secretary Benson's special assistant in charge of farm credit and drought aid, told Thurmond he has authorized an immediate investigation of the needs of the farmers who suffered crop losses in the recent tornado and hail storm that struck the Ridge Spring area. He has directed local Agriculture Department officials to survey peach crop damages and report back to him.

In addition, Scott has asked Ben Boatwright, Chairman of the State ASC Committee, to submit a report on the damage to grain crops. Scott said that if the report shows a need for feed aid, he will consider re-opening the emergency feed program to the farmers in the disaster area.

Both long-term and emergency loans will be made available to tornado-stricken farmers under the disaster loan program, Scott said further.

The Civil Defense Agency has agreed also to investigate the damages to determine what type aid it may render to the civilian population in the disaster area.

Thurmond said he is making arrangements through the South Carolina Farm Bureau to set up a meeting between Department representatives and South Carolina peach growers in April or May to discuss the possibilities of a government sponsored peach crop insurance program. He pointed out also that South Carolina tobacco farmers last year paid in \$141,000 in premiums while collecting more than \$300,000 benefits from a tobacco crop insurance program.