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## **Independent Cattlemen's Association Request State and Federal Banking Regulators to Initiate Special Policies for Ranchers Hit with Natural Disaster**

**Lockhart, Texas –May 12, 2009 – For Immediate Release** –In a recent letter to state and federal banking regulators, the Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas (ICA) requested that those agencies initiate special policies for Texas ranchers and farmers who have fallen victim to drought, wildfire or hurricane damage. Many ranchers throughout the state are patiently awaiting federal disaster aid. Several disaster relief programs are not yet in place due to the late passage of the 2008/2009 Farm Bill and the many vacant United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) positions slowly being filled by the Obama administration. Although funds are available, the details and rules are not in place for USDA to begin distribution.

After months of suffering, many ranchers across the state patiently wait for the USDA to begin implementation of the Livestock Indemnity Program and the Emergency Feed Assistance Program. “Disaster impacted ranchers need their bankers’ help now more than ever before,” stated Rosalee Coleman, ICA 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President of George West. “We are asking the bank regulators to allow ranchers with loans who are awaiting federal assistance to be given special credit classification and not be subject to collection activities until federal aid can reach them,” Coleman added.

ICA believes that ranchers can bounce back from most disasters, but in some cases they need time and financial assistance to recover. With the support of our banking regulators and substantial aid from USDA, Texas ranchers will recover. The Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas is a statewide organization of ranching families founded in 1974 to represent the rural values of its members.