



**Communicating for America  
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## Local, State or Federal Government: Which is a Farmer to Believe?

There has been terrible flooding in many locations all over the country this year. Record snowfall coupled with an overabundance of spring rain has threatened towns and farms up and down the Mississippi. Federal officials have been faced with a 'Sophie's Choice' between whether to cause flooding to towns or to farmland.

In southern Missouri and Illinois small communities including Cairo, IL, which is across the river from a levy on the Missouri side, were threatened by a swollen Mississippi river, and there appeared to be no fix that could save these communities. The US Corp of Engineers, which has federal jurisdiction over all water ways and bodies of water, came up with the idea of blowing up levees located upstream from Cairo; this action would disperse the water before it flooded the communities. It would probably save the communities from flooding but could destroy thousands of acres of prime farmland for at least this year and possibly longer.

The local units of government wanted the Corps of Engineers to take another look at the situation to see if they could come up with a better plan that would not destroy as much farmland, but they were unsuccessful. The governor of Missouri put an order to not destroy the levee but he was told that the Corp of Engineers had the power over the governor.

So the levees were blown up and the farmland was destroyed. Now the landowners have discovered that there is a clause in the Federal Crop Insurance policy stating that the insurance is not valid if the incident is not natural or is manmade. At first glance it sure looks like the blowing up of the levees is a manmade occurrence. The USDA first ruled that the damaged cropland would not be covered because it was caused by people and not natural causes.

I now know that the federal government has power to override any local or state decision. The USDA has reversed its decision on the farmer's loss of coverage on Federal Crop Insurance. The complaints were heard and the flooded crops will now be covered. It remains to be seen what permanent damage was caused by the flooding of the cropland and if and how farmers would be compensated for their losses. The farmers will also receive their program payments if they are due any from the USDA for this years crops.

All levels of government are important, but we need to be mindful to make sure one doesn't do harm at the expense of the others.

Thank you,

Wayne Nelson  
CA President