For Immediate Release
July 15, 1936

WPA and Other Government Agencies Combine to Aid Drought Sufferers in Southeastern States.

The combined efforts of half a dozen governmental agencies, led and coordinated by the Works Progress Administration, are being brought to bear on the problems of drought sufferers in the Southeast.

Malcolm J. Miller, southeastern field representative for the Works Progress Administration, has concluded conferences at Columbia, S. C., which will result in material extensions of the services of the Works Progress Administration, Resettlement Administration, Soil Conservation Service, State Highway Department, and other allied groups to bring immediate succor to between 5,000 and 10,000 South Carolinians.

A similar conference is being held in Atlanta today and, probably, subsequent dates at the capitals of other States in the drought-stricken areas.

"While the situation here is not as acute as in some of the Middle Western States," Mr. Miller declared, "there is considerable actual suffering and an even greater potentiality for suffering if immediate relief measures are not undertaken.

"South Carolina is one of the worst affected States in the region. Cash crops—principally cotton—have been completely wiped out in some counties. In many others, acreage devoted to feed, vegetables and truck gardens have been
burned over with the result that many families will shortly face privation not only for themselves, but for their livestock as well."

He added that the Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation had been applied to for an immediate shipment of 96 carloads of stock feed for South Carolina farmers.

Meanwhile, reports coming from other States in the Southeast drought area, indicated that the Works Progress Administration was leading the battle against destitution along a wide front.

Twenty-two counties in Georgia have already been officially designated for emergency treatment, and Miss Gay Shepperson, State Works Progress Administrator, asserted today that she expected the number to be doubled before the weekend.

Occasional showers and thunderstorms spotted about the State in the last twenty-four hours have had little visible effect on the situation, she declared.

The most acute situation was said to exist in the southern counties, with some sections completely denuded of crops.

"This is the worst drought Georgia has known in years," she added.

Failure of the wild berry crop in Alabama has added to the perplexities of tenants, sharecroppers, and laborers who have already been deprived of their normal farm work this summer by the drought, State Works Progress Administrator Ray Crow reported. Thousands of rural workers have been accustomed to supplement their farm incomes by berry picking, but with the absence of any general rains in large sections of the State since March, berries have shriveled on the bush.
Coincidentally, reports have reached Montgomery that hundreds of small farmers and tenants have had to slaughter their small livestock holdings and even milk cows in order to provide food for their families.

Additional project employment is proceeding rapidly in most of the affected States, however, as local Works Progress Administration offices become swamped with applications for help. Farm-to-market roads are absorbing most of the new influx of workers.

Water conservation projects, so widely adapted to the Middle West, are not considered practical in the Southeast, since the region is rarely visited by droughts of any intensity and the underground water table is said to be adequate.