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Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton and Acting Secretary of Agriculture D. Morse today announced the signing of an agreement with the Department of Agriculture for the free distribution of feed grains to Navajo Indians in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah, for the maintenance of subsistence livestock.

The program is being initiated, Secretary Seaton said, because of the acute economic distress produced among Navajo tribal members as a result of drought conditions in previous years.

President Eisenhower has already designated the entire Navajo Reservation as an "acute distress area" for purposes of the program.

To be eligible, a Navajo Indian must own not more than 20 "animal units" of livestock maintained primarily for subsistence purposes and must be found by the tribe to be in need of such assistance. An "animal unit" is defined as one cow, one bull or steer, two heifers, three calves, five sheep or goats, or seven lambs or kids.

The grains will be made available from stocks of the Commodity Credit Corporation and will be delivered in carload lots at one or more central locations in response to orders placed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Navajo Tribe will take over responsibility for storing and handling the grains at the delivery points and for distributing them to the eligible Indians.

Distribution will be limited to not more than four pounds of feed per animal unit each day.