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*United States Attorney*  
*Western District of Louisiana*

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**LOCAL FARMER AND PHYSICIAN SENTENCED FOR  
DEFRAUDING CROP LOSS DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

**MONROE, La.** – Daniel Estes Crook, 55, of Mer Rouge, La., was sentenced in federal court for defrauding the Farm Service Agency out of \$477,792 in federal disaster benefits and emergency loan money that was obtained based on false statements, United States Attorney Stephanie A. Finley announced today. Crook was sentenced to 24 months in prison, 5 years of supervised release, and was ordered to pay \$344,515.59. U. S. District Judge Robert G. James also ordered that Crook be remanded into custody immediately.

Crook, an emergency room physician and farmer in Franklin and Catahoula Parishes, was convicted at trial on two counts of making false statements or reports to the Farm Service Agency, the successor to the Farmers Home Administration, when he submitted applications on behalf of Crook Farms Partnership for crop loss disaster benefits and emergency loan money that was designed to offset the 1998 drought. The jury also convicted Crook on six counts of trading and/or selling equipment that was collateral for another \$500,000 loan.

U. S. Attorney Stephanie Finley stated: “This sentence is the result of the hard work of the prosecutors and investigators in this case. Lying to the Farm Service Agency is not something that we take lightly, and our office will continue to prosecute those who try to benefit from defrauding the agency.”

The case was investigated by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General, and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys C. Mignonne Griffing and Robin McCoy.

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