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Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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FSA News - Lone Star State Edition

Farm Service Agency Texas State Office

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From the Acting State Executive Director

Texans stand strong, and we stand with you.

Many leaders have echoed that sentiment to Texans who face the devastation brought by Hurricane Harvey. I don't believe our fellow Texans can hear it enough.

I am honored to serve an agency in which both the mission and its people truly embody that idea. Even before the severe weather left our state, I saw FSA employees across Texas jump into action through volunteerism, donations, and program delivery preparation.

As efforts begin to turn from emergency to recovery, local FSA offices will offer a wide variety of services and resources to help Texas farmers and ranchers recover from losses caused by Hurricane Harvey.

If your local USDA Service Center is closed due to hurricane damage and you need immediate hurricane-related FSA assistance, you can call the **FSA Texas Harvey InfoLine for Disaster Assistance at 1-866-680-6069**.

Division Chiefs:

Ronda Arnett
Gaye De Leon, Acting
Chris Morris
Darren Owens
David Sullivan

This month's Newsletter is dedicated to providing relevant disaster assistance and recovery program information. More information on FSA disaster programs can be found at www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster. To find your local FSA office, please visit offices.usda.gov.

To find contact information for your local office go to:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/tx>

Our thoughts and prayers are with Texas farmers and ranchers. We know you are strong, and we truly stand with you to assist in any way we can.

Sincerely,

Erasmio (Eddie) Trevino
Acting State Executive Director
FSA Texas State Office

Filing a Notice of Loss

The CCC-576, Notice of Loss, is used to report failed acreage and prevented planting and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. Timely filing a Notice of Loss is required for all crops including grasses. For losses on crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), you must file a CCC-576, Notice of Loss, in the FSA County Office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent or 15 calendar days after the normal harvest date.

Producers of hand-harvested crops must notify FSA of damage or loss through the administrative County Office within 72 hours of the date of damage or loss first becomes apparent. This notification can be provided by filing a CCC-576, email, fax, or phone. Producers who notify the County Office by a method other than filing the CCC-576 must still file a CCC-576 within the required 15 calendar days.

If filing for prevented planting, an acreage report and CCC-576 must be filed within 15 calendar days of the final planting date for the crop.

FSA Assistance for Feed, Grazing Losses due to Flooding

The Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) provides emergency assistance to eligible livestock, honeybee, and farm-raised fish producers who have losses due to disease, adverse weather or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires, not covered by other agricultural disaster assistance programs.

Eligible livestock losses include grazing losses not covered under the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), loss of purchased feed and/or mechanically harvested feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, additional cost of transporting water because of an eligible drought and additional cost associated with gathering livestock to treat for cattle tick fever.

Eligible honeybee losses include loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, cost of additional feed purchased above normal quantities due to an eligible adverse weather condition, colony losses in excess of normal mortality due to an eligible weather event or loss condition, including CCD, and hive losses due to eligible adverse weather.

Eligible farm-raised fish losses include death losses in excess of normal mortality and/or loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event.

(Cont'd...)

Producers who suffer eligible livestock, honeybee, or farm-raised fish losses from Oct. 1, 2016, to Sept. 30, 2017 must file:

- Notice of Loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent or Nov. 1, 2017
- Application for payment by Nov. 1, 2017

The Farm Bill caps ELAP disaster funding at \$20 million per federal fiscal year.

The following ELAP Fact Sheets (by topic) are available online:

- ELAP for Farm-Raised Fish Fact Sheet
- ELAP for Livestock Fact Sheet
- ELAP for Honeybees Fact Sheet

To view these and other FSA program fact sheets, visit the FSA fact sheet web page at www.fsa.usda.gov/factsheets.

FSA Program Helps Recover After Non-Insured Crop Losses

The Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters including Hurricane Harvey (includes native grass for grazing).

Eligible producers must have purchased NAP coverage for 2017 crops. A notice of loss must be filed within 15 calendar days of when the loss is apparent or 15 calendar days after the normal harvest date.

Eligible crops must be commercially produced agricultural commodities for which crop insurance is not available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

For more information on NAP, contact your local FSA office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap.

Assistance for Livestock Losses Reported After Disaster

Documentation, Timely Notice of Loss is Crucial Part of Successful Application

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides assistance to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law. LIP compensates livestock owners and contract growers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather, including losses due to hurricanes, floods, blizzards, wildfires, extreme heat or extreme cold.

Eligible losses for 2017 must occur on or after Jan. 1, 2017, and no later than 60 calendar days from the ending date of the applicable adverse weather event or attack.

Producers who suffer livestock losses in 2017 must file both of the following:

- A Notice of Loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss was apparent or,
- An application for payment by March 31, 2018

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Producers should record all relevant information regarding livestock losses. This supporting documentation must be provided when losses are reported to the local FSA office, including:

- Documentation of the number, kind, type, and weight range of livestock that have died, including photographs or video records of ownership and losses, if possible
- Rendering truck receipts by kind, type, and weight - important to document prior to disposal
- Beginning inventory, supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts
- Documentation from Animal Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Natural Resources, or other sources to substantiate eligible death loss due to an eligible loss condition
- Documentation that livestock were removed from grazing pastures due to an eligible adverse weather or loss condition
- Costs of transporting livestock feed to eligible livestock, such as receipts for equipment rental fees for hay lifts
- Feed purchase receipts if feed supplies or grazing pastures are destroyed

USDA has established normal mortality rates for each type and weight range of eligible livestock, i.e. Adult Beef Cow = 1.5% and Non-Adult Beef Cattle (less than 400 pounds) = 3%. These established percentages reflect losses that are considered expected or typical under “normal” conditions.

Additional Information about LIP is available at your local FSA office or online at: www.fsa.usda.gov.

Tree Assistance Program (TAP) Available

Orchardists and nursery tree growers who experience losses from natural disasters during calendar year 2017 must submit a TAP application either 90 calendar days after the disaster event or the date when the loss is apparent. TAP was authorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014 as a permanent disaster program. TAP provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines damaged by natural disasters.

Eligible tree types include trees, bushes or vines that produce an annual crop for commercial purposes. Nursery trees include ornamental, fruit, nut and Christmas trees that are produced for commercial sale. Trees used for pulp or timber are ineligible.

To qualify for TAP, orchardists must suffer a qualifying tree, bush or vine loss in excess of 15 percent mortality from an eligible natural disaster. The eligible trees, bushes or vines must have been owned when the natural disaster occurred; however, eligible growers are not required to own the land on which the eligible trees, bushes and vines were planted.

If the TAP application is approved, the eligible trees, bushes and vines must be replaced within 12 months from the date the application is approved. The cumulative total quantity of acres planted to trees, bushes or vines, for which a producer can receive TAP payments, cannot exceed 500 acres annually.

Emergency Conservation Program Assistance Available in Texas Counties Affected by Hurricane Harvey

The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) provides emergency funding and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters and to implement emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought.

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For land to be eligible, the natural disaster must create new conservation problems that, if untreated, would:

- Be so costly to rehabilitate that Federal assistance is needed to return land to productive agricultural use
- Is unusual and is not the type that would recur frequently in same area
- Affect productive capacity of farmland
- Impair or endanger land

A producer qualifying for ECP assistance may receive cost-share levels not to exceed 75 percent of the eligible cost of restoration measures. No producer is eligible for more than \$200,000 cost sharing per natural disaster occurrence. The following types of measures may be eligible:

- Removing debris from farmland
- Grading, shaping, or releveling severely damaged farmland
- Restoring permanent fences
- Restoring conservation structures and other similar installations

Producers who suffer natural disaster losses should contact the local FSA Office for ECP deadlines.

To be eligible for assistance, practices must not be started until all of the following are met:

- Application for cost-share assistance has been filed
- Local FSA County Committee (COC) or its representative has conducted an onsite inspection of the damaged area
- Agency responsible for technical assistance, such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), has made a needs determination, which may include cubic yards of earthmoving, etc., required for rehabilitation

For more information about ECP, please visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

Emergency Loan Program

Emergency Loans are available to producers with agriculture operations located in a county under a primary or contiguous Presidential or Secretarial Disaster designation. These low interest loans help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought or flooding. These loans may be used to:

- Restore or replace essential property,
- Pay all or part of production costs associated with the disaster,
- Pay essential family living expenses,
- Reorganize the farming operation, or
- Refinance certain debts, excluding real estate

Emergency Loans can pay up to 100 percent of total actual production and physical losses, up to the maximum loan amount of \$500,000.

More information about Emergency Loans and other FSA Disaster Assistance programs can be found at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/tx>.

HayNet: Online Hay and Grazing Acres Locator Tool

FSA's **HayNet** website, www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet, is the "go to" online resource for agricultural producers to list the need for hay and grazing acres or the availability of hay and grazing acres.

Producers in need of hay and/or grazing acres to support livestock due to severe weather or other emergency can use **HayNet** to post an advertisement seeking resources. Conversely, landowners with hay and/or grazing acres available for livestock producers can post an advertisement as well.

Some details regarding use of the **HayNet** website include:

- There is a one-time registration process to be completed by all users posting an ad
- Users who want to browse ads do not need an eAuthentication user ID
- Keep ads current and remove ads you no longer need or want
- Hay and grazing acre ads will be automatically removed after 13 months
- No corporate advertisements are permitted

HayNet is brought to you by FSA as a public service. The sole purpose of this online resource is to provide a site for the exchange of information. FSA does not endorse, guarantee, or otherwise make representations of any kind regarding any user of this site and FSA is not responsible for defining the terms of grazing agreements or lease contracts.

For more information about **HayNet** and other FSA services and programs, please contact your local FSA office. For local FSA Service Center contact information, please visit offices.usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).