

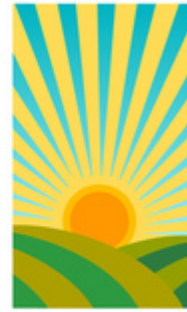
May 15, 2017



Farm Service Agency

# GovDelivery Electronic News Service

## NEWSLETTER



Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)

- [Sonny Perdue Sworn in as 31st U.S. Secretary of Agriculture](#)
- [USDA Offers Wildfire Recovery Assistance](#)
- [How to Document Wildfire Losses](#)
- [FSA Offers Livestock Indemnity Program \(LIP\) for Wildfire Livestock Losses](#)
- [FSA Offers Assistance for Wildfire Feed and Grazing Losses](#)
- [Maintaining Good Credit History](#)
- [USDA Announces Streamlined Guaranteed Loans and Additional Lender Category for Small-Scale Operators](#)
- [Dates to Remember](#)

---

## Florida FSA Newsletter

---

### Florida Farm Service Agency

4440 NW 25th Place, St 1  
Gainesville, FL 32606

[www.fsa.usda.gov/fl](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/fl)

#### State Committee:

Martin Griswold  
Donell Gwinn  
Gayle King  
James Peebles

#### Acting Executive Director:

Debby Folsom

#### Executive Officer:

Debby Folsom

#### Division Chiefs:

#### Administrative Officer

Mark Cotrell

### Sonny Perdue Sworn in as 31st U.S. Secretary of Agriculture

Sonny Perdue was sworn in as the 31st U.S. Secretary of Agriculture by fellow Georgian and Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court Clarence Thomas in a brief ceremony on April 25 at the Supreme Court building.

Perdue grew up on a dairy and diversified row crop farm in Bonaire, Georgia. Being uniquely qualified as a former farmer, agribusinessman, veterinarian, state legislator and governor of Georgia, he has experienced the agriculture industry from every possible perspective throughout his life.

As secretary, Perdue says he will champion the concerns of farmers, ranchers, foresters and producers, and will work tirelessly to solve the issues facing our farm families.

Perdue's policies as U.S. Secretary of Agriculture will be guided by four principles which will inform his decisions. First, he will maximize the ability of the men and women of America's agriculture and

## Farm Program

Tom Hockert

## Farm Loans

Justin Teuton

Please contact your local FSA Office for questions specific to your operation or county.

agribusiness sector to create jobs, to produce and sell the foods and fiber that feed and clothe the world, and to reap the earned reward of their labor. Second, he will prioritize customer service every day for American taxpayers and consumers. Third, as Americans expect a safe and secure food supply, USDA will continue to serve in the critical role of ensuring the food we put on the table to feed our families meets the strict safety standards we've established. And fourth, Perdue will always remember that America's agricultural bounty comes directly from the land.

For more information about Secretary Perdue, visit [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov).

---

## USDA Offers Wildfire Recovery Assistance

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers disaster assistance and low-interest loan programs to assist agricultural producers in their recovery efforts following wildfires or other qualifying natural disasters.

Available programs and loans include:

- **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 excessive wind and qualifying drought (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.
- **Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)** - offers payments to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather. Eligible losses may include those determined by FSA to have been caused by wildfires, hurricanes, floods, blizzards, tropical storms, tornados, lightning, extreme heat, and extreme cold. Producers will be required to provide verifiable documentation of death losses resulting from an eligible adverse weather event and must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is apparent.
- **Tree Assistance Program (TAP)** – provides assistance to eligible orchardists and nursery tree growers for qualifying tree, shrub and vine losses due to natural disasters including excessive wind and qualifying drought.
- **Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)** - provides emergency relief for losses due to feed or water shortages, disease, adverse weather, or other conditions, which are not adequately addressed by other disaster programs. ELAP covers physically damaged or destroyed livestock feed that was purchased or mechanically harvested forage or feedstuffs intended for use as feed for the producer's eligible livestock. In order to be considered eligible, harvested forage must be baled; forage that is only cut, raked or windrowed is not eligible. ELAP also covers up to 150 lost grazing days in instances when a producer has been forced to remove livestock from a grazing pasture due to wildfire and for beekeepers, ELAP covers beehive losses (the physical structure) in instances where the hive has been destroyed by a natural disaster including flooding, high winds and tornadoes. Producers must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent.
- **Emergency Loan Program** – 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.

- **Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)** - provides emergency funding for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate land severely damaged by natural disasters; includes fence loss.
- **HayNet** - is an Internet-based Hay and Grazing Net Ad Service allowing farmers and ranchers to share 'Need Hay' ads and 'Have Hay' ads online. Farmers also can use another feature to post advertisements for grazing land, specifically ads announcing the availability of grazing land or ads requesting a need for land to graze. [www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/haynet).

For more information on these programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster) or contact your local FSA office.

## How to Document Wildfire Losses

Producers who suffered excessive livestock death losses and grazing or feed losses due to recent wildfires may be eligible for disaster assistance programs through the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) offers payments to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) provides emergency relief for losses due to feed or water shortages, disease, adverse weather, or other conditions, which are not adequately addressed by other disaster programs.

To participate in LIP, producers will be required to provide verifiable documentation of death losses resulting from an eligible adverse weather event and must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is apparent. To participate in ELAP, producers must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent and should maintain documentation and receipts.

Producers should record all pertinent information regarding livestock losses due to the eligible adverse weather or loss condition, including:

- Documentation of the number, kind, type, and weight range of livestock that have died, supplemented if possible by photographs or video records of ownership and losses;
- 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 losses 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 and snow removal;
- Feed purchase receipts if feed supplies or grazing pastures are destroyed;
- Number of gallons of water transported to livestock due to water shortages.

For more information on these programs and documentation requirements, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster) or contact your local FSA office.

## FSA Offers Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) for Wildfire Livestock Losses

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) compensates livestock owners and contract growers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather, including losses due to wildfires, hurricanes, floods, blizzards, extreme heat or extreme cold.

For 2017, eligible losses 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. A notice of loss must be filed with FSA within 30 days of when the loss of livestock is apparent. Participants must provide the following supporting

documentation to their local FSA office no later than 90 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the eligible loss condition occurred.

- Proof of death documentation
- Copy of growers contracts
- Proof of normal mortality documentation

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. 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
- An application for payment by March 31, 2018.

Additional Information about LIP is available at your local FSA office or online at:  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster).

---

## FSA Offers Assistance for Wildfire Feed and Grazing Losses

*Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)*

Producers who suffered livestock feed or grazing losses due to recent wildfires could be eligible for assistance through the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP).

ELAP provides emergency relief for losses due to feed or water shortages, disease, adverse weather, or other conditions, which are not adequately addressed by other disaster programs.

ELAP covers physically damaged or destroyed livestock feed that was purchased or mechanically harvested forage or feedstuffs intended for use as feed for the **producer's** eligible livestock. In order to be considered eligible, harvested forage must be baled. Forage that is only cut, raked or windrowed is not eligible. Producers must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent.

ELAP also covers up to 150 lost grazing days in instances when a producer has been forced to remove livestock from a grazing pasture due to wildfire.

For beekeepers, ELAP covers beehive losses (the physical structure) in instances where the hive has been destroyed by a natural disaster including flooding, high winds, wildfire and tornadoes.

Producers with a qualifying loss should contact the local county FSA office to file a notice of loss within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent. Producers should also maintain records and receipts documenting that livestock were removed from the grazing pasture due to wildfire, costs of transporting livestock feed to eligible livestock, receipts for equipment rental fees for hay lifts, feed purchase receipts and the number of gallons of water transported to livestock due to water shortages.

For more information regarding ELAP, please contact the local County FSA Office or visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster).

---

## Maintaining Good Credit History

Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan programs require that applicants have a satisfactory credit history. A credit report is requested for all FSA direct farm loan applicants. These reports are reviewed to verify outstanding debts, if bills are paid timely and to determine the impact on cash flow.

Information found on a customer's credit report is strictly confidential and is used only as an aid in conducting FSA business.

Our farm loan staff will discuss options with you if you have an unfavorable credit report and will provide a copy of your report. If you dispute the accuracy of the information on the credit report, it is up to you to contact the issuing credit report company to resolve any errors or inaccuracies.

There are multiple ways to remedy an unfavorable credit score.

- Make sure to pay bills on time. Setting up automatic payments or automated reminders can be an effective way to remember payment due dates.
- Pay down existing debt.
- Keep your credit card balances low.
- Avoid suddenly opening or closing existing credit accounts. FSA's farm loan staff will guide you through the process, which may require you to reapply for a loan after improving or correcting your credit report. For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

---

## **USDA Announces Streamlined Guaranteed Loans and Additional Lender Category for Small-Scale Operators**

*Options Help More Beginning, Small and Urban Producers Gain Access to Credit*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the availability of a streamlined version of USDA guaranteed loans, which are tailored for smaller scale farms and urban producers. The program, called EZ Guarantee Loans, uses a simplified application process to help beginning, small, underserved and family farmers and ranchers apply for loans of up to \$100,000 from USDA-approved lenders to purchase farmland or finance agricultural operations.

A new category of lenders will join traditional lenders, such as banks and credit unions, in offering USDA EZ Guarantee Loans. Microlenders, which include Community Development Financial Institutions and Rural Rehabilitation Corporations, will be able to offer their customers up to \$50,000 of EZ Guaranteed Loans, helping to reach urban areas and underserved producers. Banks, credit unions and other traditional USDA-approved lenders, can offer customers up to \$100,000 to help with agricultural operation costs.

EZ Guarantee Loans offer low interest rates and terms up to seven years for financing operating expenses and 40 years for financing the purchase of farm real estate. USDA-approved lenders can issue these loans with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) guaranteeing the loan up to 95 percent.

More information about the available types of FSA farm loans can be found at [www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans) or by contacting your local FSA office.

---

## **Dates to Remember**

May 29 - Federal Holiday Observed. Offices Closed.

---

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).