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Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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Georgia State FSA Newsletter

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Deadline Approaches for the 2017 Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program

Georgia State Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers that the deadline to apply for assistance under the 2017 Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program (2017 WHIP) is Nov. 16, 2018. Agricultural producers affected by hurricanes and wildfires in 2017 can apply for assistance to help recover and rebuild their farming operations.

The program was authorized by Congress earlier this year by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018.

Eligible crops, trees, bushes, or vines, located in a county declared in a Presidential Emergency Disaster Declaration or Secretarial Disaster Designation as a primary county are eligible for assistance if the producer suffered a loss as a result of a hurricane during

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calendar year 2017. Also, losses located in a county not designated as a primary county may be eligible if the producer provides documentation showing that the loss was due to a hurricane or wildfire in 2017. A list of counties that received qualifying hurricane declarations and designations is available at <https://www.farmers.gov/recover/whip>. Eligibility is determined by Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees.

Agricultural production losses due to conditions caused by last year's wildfires and hurricanes, including excessive rain, high winds, flooding, mudslides, fire, and heavy smoke, could qualify for assistance through the program. Typically, 2017 WHIP is only designed to provide assistance for production losses, however, if quality was taken into consideration under the insurance or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy, where production was further adjusted, the adjusted production will be used in calculating assistance under this program.

Eligible crops include those for which federal crop insurance or NAP coverage is available, excluding crops intended for grazing. A list of crops covered by crop insurance is available through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Actuarial Information Browser at

<https://webapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/actuarialinformationbrowser>.

Producers will be subject to payment limitations based on their average adjusted gross income.

Both insured and uninsured producers are eligible to apply for 2017 WHIP. However, all producers receiving 2017 WHIP payments will be required to purchase crop insurance and/or NAP, at the 60 percent coverage level or higher, for the next two available crop years to meet statutory requirements. Producers who fail to purchase crop insurance for the next two applicable years will be required to pay back the 2017 WHIP payment.

Each producer will be asked to provide acceptable production records which must be either verifiable or reliable production records. If a producer is unable to provide production records, USDA will calculate the production based on the higher of the producer certified production and the county disaster yield.

Contact your local County FSA Office to make an appointment to apply. For more information on USDA disaster assistance programs, visit <https://www.farmers.gov/recover>.

USDA Reminds Producers of Disaster Program Deadlines

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds Georgia producers who experienced losses from natural disasters during the 2017 and 2018 calendar years that they

may be eligible for assistance through the Tree Assistance Program (TAP), Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) and Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP).

Tree Assistance Program (TAP):

TAP provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines lost due to natural disasters. Payment eligibility is triggered when a mortality loss in excess of 15 percent on a stand (adjusted for normal mortality) occurs due to natural disaster.

In addition, up to \$15 million is available to eligible pecan orchardists or pecan nursery tree growers for certain mortality losses incurred during 2017. To be eligible, the grower must have suffered a mortality loss on a stand in excess of 7.5 percent, but less than 15 percent, adjusted for normal mortality from Jan. 1, 2017, through Dec. 31, 2017.

For 2017 and 2018 TAP losses, and 2017 Pecan TAP losses, growers have until the later of Dec. 3, 2018, or 90 calendar days after the disaster event or date when the loss of trees becomes apparent to submit an application with supporting documentation.

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

ELAP provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish who have suffered losses due to an adverse weather or loss condition, including blizzards, disease, water shortages and wildfires. ELAP assistance is provided for losses not covered by other disaster assistance programs.

For 2017 and 2018 ELAP, producers must file a notice of loss and application for payment at their local FSA office by Dec. 3, 2018 for losses occurring from Oct. 1, 2016, through Sept. 30, 2018.

Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP):

LIP provides compensation to eligible livestock owners or contract growers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality, or injury resulting in reduced value, caused by an eligible loss condition.

For 2017 and 2018 LIP, a livestock owner or contract grower must file a notice of loss the later of 30 calendar days from when the loss of livestock is first apparent, or Dec. 3, 2018. For 2017 losses, a livestock owner or contract grower must file an application for payment by Dec. 3, 2018. For 2018 losses, a livestock owner or contract grower must file an application for payment by, March 1, 2019.

Other Amendments to the 2014 Farm Bill by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018

In February, the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 made several changes to FSA disaster programs. This includes eliminating the \$20 million fiscal year funding cap for ELAP, eliminating the \$125,000 payment limitation for LIP for 2017 and future years and allowing producers to receive a payment for injured livestock that are sold for a reduced price due to an eligible event.

As a result of these changes, starting June 4, producers were allowed to submit ELAP, LIP and LFP applications for 2017 losses if they reached the payment limitation under the previous rules. The application periods for these programs for the 2017 program year will close on Dec. 3, 2018. Producers who already submitted applications and received decisions on their applications for these

years do not need to file again but can reapply if they have additional losses or their application or notice of loss was denied because it was late filed.

Contact your local FSA office for program deadlines. For more information on FSA disaster assistance programs or to find your local USDA Service Center, visit <https://www.farmers.gov/>.

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

The Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) provides emergency assistance to eligible livestock, honeybees, 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.

Producers who suffer eligible livestock, honeybee, or farm-raised fish losses from Oct. 1, 2017 to Sept. 30, 2018 must file:

- A notice of loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent or by **Dec. 3, 2018**
- An application for payment by **Dec. 3, 2018**

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.

USDA Enrollment Period for Safety Net Coverage in 2018

Farmers and ranchers with generic base acres in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) safety net program still have time to enroll for the 2018 crop year. Producers with generic base acres have until **Dec. 7, 2018**, to allocate generic base acres, update yields,

make a program election for seed cotton base acres and enroll farms that formerly contained generic base acres.

Since shares and ownership of a farm can change year-to-year, producers must enroll by signing a contract each program year.

The producers on a farm not enrolled for the 2018 enrollment period will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs for the 2018 crop should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program. Producers who made their elections in previous years must still enroll during the 2018 enrollment period.

The ARC and PLC programs were authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and offer a safety net to agricultural producers when there is a substantial drop in prices or revenues for covered commodities. Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium grain rice (which includes short grain and sweet rice), safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed, wheat and upland cotton. For more details regarding these programs, go to www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

For more information, producers are encouraged to visit their local FSA office. To find a local FSA office, visit <https://www.farmers.gov/>.

USDA Market Facilitation Program

USDA launched the trade mitigation package aimed at assisting farmers suffering from damage due to unjustified trade retaliation by foreign nations. Producers of certain commodities can now sign up for the Market Facilitation Program (MFP).

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will administer MFP to provide payments to corn (fresh and processed), cotton, dairy, hog, sorghum, soybean (fresh and processed), wheat, shelled almond, and fresh sweet cherry producers. An announcement about further payments will be made in the coming months, if warranted.

The sign-up period for MFP runs through Jan. 15, 2019, with information and instructions provided at www.farmers.gov/mfp. MFP provides payments to producers of eligible commodities who have been significantly impacted by actions of foreign governments resulting in the loss of traditional exports. Eligible producers should apply after harvest is complete, as payments will only be issued once production is reported.

A payment will be issued on 50 percent of the producer's total production, multiplied by the MFP rate for a specific commodity. A second payment period, if warranted, will be determined by the USDA.

For a list of initial MFP payments rates, view the [MFP Fact Sheet](#).

MFP payments are capped per person or legal entity as follows:

- A combined \$125,000 for eligible crop commodities
- A combined \$125,000 for dairy production and hogs
- A combined \$125,000 for fresh sweet cherries and almonds

Applicants must also have an average adjusted gross income for tax years 2014, 2015, and 2016 of less than \$900,000. Applicants must also comply with the provisions of the Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation regulations.

Expanded Hog Timeline

USDA has expanded the timeline for producers whom the Aug. 1, 2018, date does not accurately represent the number of head of live hogs they own. Producers may now choose any date between July 15 to Aug. 15, 2018, that correctly reflects their actual operation.

MFP applications are available online at www.farmers.gov/mfp. Applications can be completed at a local FSA office or submitted electronically either by scanning, emailing, or faxing. To locate or contact your local FSA office, visit www.farmers.gov.

USDA Acreage Reporting Deadline for Perennial Forage Changes to July 15

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) has established a new acreage reporting deadline for perennial forage for 2019 and subsequent years. Previously set in the fall, the new deadline is July 15 for all states, except for Hawaii and Puerto Rico.

Timely and accurate acreage reports for all crops and land uses, including prevented planting or failed acreage, are the foundation for many FSA program benefits, including disaster programs for livestock owners. Producers must report their acreage to maintain program eligibility.

Producers who have coverage for perennial forage under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) must report their crop acreage by the earlier of any of the following:

- the established acreage reporting date (July 15)
- 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest or grazing of the specific crop acreage being reported
- the established normal harvest date for the end of the coverage period.

Elections for the 2018 County Committee

Elections for USDA's Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Georgia County Committees are underway.

It is important that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and USDA. The 2018 election in Georgia Counties will be conducted for the representative Local Administrative Area (LAA):

County committee members are a critical component of FSA operations. Committees should be comprised of members who reflect the diversity of producers involved in production agriculture in our Georgia counties. This means that producers representing underserved groups or communities should be on the committee to speak on behalf of their constituency.

Underserved producers are beginning, women and other minority farmers and ranchers and land owners and/or operators who have limited resources. Other minority groups including Native

American and Alaska Natives; persons under the poverty level, and persons who have disabilities are also considered underserved.

County committee election ballots were mailed to eligible voters on Nov. 5, 2018. The last day to return completed ballots to the County USDA service center is Dec. 3, 2018.

For more information on eligibility to serve on FSA county committees, visit: www.fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) Program

FSA borrowers with farms located in designated primary or contiguous disaster areas who are unable to make their scheduled FSA loan payments should consider the Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) program.

DSA is available to producers who suffered losses as a result of a natural disaster and is intended to relieve immediate and temporary financial stress. FSA is authorized to consider setting aside the portion of a payment(s) needed for the operation to continue on a viable scale.

Borrowers must have at least two years left on the term of their loan in order to qualify.

Borrowers have eight months from the date of the disaster designation to submit a complete application. The application must include a written request for DSA signed by all parties liable for the debt along with production records and financial history for the operating year in which the disaster occurred. FSA may request additional information from the borrower in order to determine eligibility.

All farm loans must be current or less than 90 days past due at the time the DSA application is complete. Borrowers may not set aside more than one installment on each loan.

The amount set-aside, including interest accrued on the principal portion of the set-aside, is due on or before the final due date of the loan.

For more information, contact your local FSA farm loan office.

Ninety-One Counties Eligible for Emergency Loans Following Presidential and Secretarial Disaster Declaration

Ninety-one Georgia counties were declared a primary and/or contiguous disaster due to Hurricane Michael. Under this designation, producers with operations in any primary or contiguous county are eligible to apply for low interest emergency loans.

Emergency loans help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding and other natural disasters or quarantine.

Producers have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for emergency loan assistance. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent

of losses, security available and repayment ability. Producers can borrow up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses, to a maximum amount of \$500,000.

For more information about emergency loans, please contact your local FSA office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

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