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USDA Offers Disaster Assistance to Texas Farmers and Ranchers Impacted by Winter Storms

Farm Service Agency Ready to Assist Agricultural Producers Slammed by Winter Storm Goliath

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Statement from Judith A. Canales, Texas FSA State Executive Director

Our hearts go out to Texas farmers and ranchers affected by Winter Storm Goliath. USDA and Texas Farm Service Agency (FSA) stand with our communities when severe weather and natural disasters impact your livelihood and disrupt your way of life.

Available Disaster Assistance Programs

FSA offers disaster assistance and low-interest loan programs to assist agricultural producers in their recovery efforts following winter storms or similar 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 (includes native grass for grazing). Eligible producers must have obtained NAP coverage for 2016 crops.
- **Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)** - provides 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 hurricanes, floods, blizzards, wildfires, tropical storms, tornados lightening, 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 disaster.
- **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. **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 floodwaters. 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.
- **Emergency Loan Program** – Available to producers with agriculture operations located in a county under a primary or contiguous **Secretarial Disaster designation.** These low interest loans help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding.
- **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.

Filing a Notice of Loss

The first step in getting help from FSA is filing a Notice of Loss. The FSA Form 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.

Some programs have additional specific guidelines:

- For **LIP and ELAP**, the Notice of Loss has to be filed within 30 days of when the loss occurred or became apparent
- For **NAP**, the Notice of Loss must be filed within 15 days of when the loss occurred or became apparent
- **TAP** does require a Notice of Loss to be filed but producers must apply for benefits

Verifiable Records

Livestock producers must produce verifiable records regarding losses. Acceptable verifiable records include but are not limited to:

- Documentation of the number and kind of livestock that have died, supplemented if possible by photographs or video records of ownership and losses
- Rendering records
- Dates of death supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts
- Costs of transporting livestock to safer grounds or to move animals to new pastures
- Feed purchases if supplies or grazing pastures are destroyed
- Crop records, including seed and fertilizer purchases, planting and production records

Online Resources

For program fact sheets and related information – www.fsa.usda.gov

To locate the nearest USDA Service Center – <http://offices.usda.gov>

Disaster Assistance Video Public Service Announcement*** - <https://youtu.be/L3XKjqEQgTk>

***(developed in cooperation with The Agricultural & Food Policy Center, Texas A&M University).

Sincerely,

Judith A. Canales

Texas Farm Service Agency Executive Director

Questions?

Please contact your local [FSA Office](#).

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