Disaster Assistance for 2021 Livestock Forage Losses

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From Sheryl's Desk

I believe that winter is upon us. Don’t forget about available programs and upcoming deadlines.

Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP)- Both Carbon and Albany Counties are eligible for the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) due to drought conditions on grazing land for 2021. Currently, Carbon County is eligible for 5 months of payment and Albany County is eligible for 4 months. To be eligible for this program, you must have ownership interest in the livestock and the grass for grazing. The deadline to apply is January 30, 2022. We will need the following information to process your application

- Weaned livestock numbers as of January 1, 2021- in the following categories: adult cattle; non-adult cattle over 500 lbs; non-adult cattle under 500 lbs; sheep- ewes, rams, yearlings; horses used for ranch work; for other eligible livestock please contact the office.
- Livestock documentation- such as, but not limited to, vet preg check bills/records, fertility checking records, bangs vaccinations, brand inspections, sales/purchase receipts, herd records, loan documents showing livestock claimed as collateral, etc.
- Livestock sold in 2020- type and kind of livestock sold in 2020 due to drought, not normal operation practice. Must provide copy of sale receipts.
- Leases- current copies of all private land leases and Forest Service permits. If you do not have written leases on the private land, let me know and I can send you our form that must be completed by you and the owner to determine if the acres are eligible. Please remember a straight AUM lease is not considered eligible acres for you, unless the agreement is that you provide capital expenditures on the property such as fencing repairs/replacement and water source repairs. Checking fence is not considered a capital expenditure.

Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP)- If you hauled water to livestock this year due to drought conditions, please make sure to get your documentation and Application for Payment into the office by January 30, 2022.

Trucking expenses for additional feed or feed stuffs purchased due to the drought is now eligible under the ELAP program. Please see specific article in newsletter for details. Deadline to apply is January 30, 2022.

This office is back to being staffed by only one employee. If you call and receive the voicemail system, PLEASE leave your name, number, and a brief message. I do NOT have caller ID so I am not aware of who is calling if you don’t leave a message. I will return all messages as soon as possible.

Upcoming Deadlines:
Disaster Assistance for 2021 Livestock Forage Losses

Producers in Carbon and Albany Counties are eligible to apply for 2021 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) benefits on native pasture.

LFP provides compensation if you suffer grazing losses for covered livestock due to drought on privately owned or cash leased land or fire on federally managed land.

County committees can only accept LFP applications after notification is received by the National Office of qualifying drought or if a federal agency prohibits producers from grazing normal permitted livestock on federally managed lands due to qualifying fire. **You must complete a CCC-853 and the required supporting documentation no later than January 30, 2022, for 2021 losses.**

For additional information about LFP, including eligible livestock and fire criteria, contact the Carbon/Albany County USDA Service Center at 307-326-5657 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

ELAP Covers Losses from Additional Cost of Transporting Water to Livestock

If you’ve incurred additional operating costs for transporting water to livestock due to an eligible drought, assistance may be available to you through the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP).

Eligible livestock must be adult or non-adult dairy cattle, beef cattle, buffalo and beefalo, as well as alpacas, deer, elk, emus, equine, goats, llamas, reindeer, or sheep. Additionally, the livestock must have been owned 60 calendar days prior to the beginning of the drought and be physically located in the county designated as a disaster area due to drought. Adequate livestock watering systems or facilities must have existed before the drought occurred and producers are only eligible if they do not normally transport water to the livestock.

Livestock that were or would have been in a feedlot are not eligible for transporting water. ELAP covers the additional cost of transporting water and does not cover the cost of the water itself.

You must file a notice of loss on form CCC-851 the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent to you or by Jan. 31, 2022. Additionally, **the deadline to submit an application for payment for 2020 ELAP assistance is Jan. 31, 2022.**

You’ll have to provide documentation to FSA that shows the method used to transport the water, the number of gallons of water transported and the number of eligible livestock to which water was transported.

To make an appointment to sign up for ELAP and to learn more about eligibility, application and documentation requirements, contact the Carbon/Albany County USDA Service Center at 307-326-5657 or visit fsa.usda.gov.
USDA Expands Assistance to Cover Feed Transportation Costs for Drought-Impacted Ranchers

In response to the severe drought conditions in the West and Great Plains, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced plans to help cover the cost of transporting feed for livestock that rely on grazing. USDA is updating the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) to immediately cover feed transportation costs for drought impacted ranchers.

ELAP provides financial assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees, and farm-raised fish for losses due to disease, certain adverse weather events or loss conditions as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture.

ELAP already covers the cost of hauling water during drought, and this change will expand the program beginning in 2021 to cover feed transportation costs where grazing and hay resources have been depleted. This includes places where:

- Drought intensity is D2 for eight consecutive weeks as indicated by the S. Drought Monitor;
- Drought intensity is D3 or greater; or
- USDA has determined a shortage of local or regional feed availability.

Cost share assistance will also be made available to cover eligible cost of treating hay or feed to prevent the spread of invasive pests like fire ants.

Under the revised policy for feed transportation cost assistance, eligible ranchers will be reimbursed 60% of feed transportation costs above what would have been incurred in a normal year. Producers qualifying as underserved (socially disadvantaged, limited resource, beginning or military veteran) will be reimbursed for 90% of the feed transportation cost. above what would have been incurred in a normal year.

A national cost formula, as established by USDA, will be used to determine reimbursement costs which will not include the first 25 miles and distances exceeding 1,000 transportation miles. The calculation will also exclude the normal cost to transport hay or feed if the producer normally purchases some feed. For 2021, the initial cost formula of $6.60 per mile will be used (before the percentage is applied) but may be adjusted on a state or regional basis.

To be eligible for ELAP assistance, livestock must be intended for grazing and producers must have incurred feed transportation costs on or after Jan. 1, 2021. Although producers will self-certify losses and expenses to FSA, producers are encouraged to maintain good records and retain receipts and related documentation in the event these documents are requested for review by the local FSA County Committee. The deadline to file an application for payment for the 2021 program year is Jan. 30, 2022.

More information on this expansion to ELAP is forthcoming. In the meantime, more information is available at fsa.usda.gov/elap or by contacting a local USDA Service Center.

Higher Loan Limit Now Available for USDA Guaranteed Farm Loans

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a higher loan limit will be available for borrowers seeking a guaranteed farm loan starting Oct. 1, 2021, from $1.776 million to $1.825 million.

FSA farm loans offer access to funding for a wide range of producer needs, from securing land to financing the purchase of equipment. Guaranteed loans are financed and serviced by commercial lenders. FSA provides up to a 95% guarantee against possible financial loss of principal and interest. Guaranteed loans can be used for both farm ownership and operating purposes.
In fiscal year 2021, FSA saw continued strong demand for guaranteed loans. FSA obligated more than $3.4 billion in guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans. This includes nearly $1.2 billion for beginning farmers. The number of guaranteed borrowers has grown by 10% to more than 38,750 farmers and ranchers over the last decade. FSA expects the increasing demand for farm loans to continue into fiscal year 2022.

**NRCS Announces Conservation Funding Opportunities for 2022**


Through conservation programs, USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical and financial assistance to help producers and landowners make conservation improvements on their land that benefit natural resources, build resiliency and contribute to the nation’s broader effort to combat the impacts of climate change.

**Applying for Assistance**

NRCS accepts applications for its conservation programs year-round. State Technical Committees, composed of representatives from conservation and agricultural-related organizations, work with NRCS to set state-specific, ranking dates to evaluate applications for funding. These dates account for producer needs, staff workload and ensure potential participants have ample opportunity to apply. Producers should apply by their state’s ranking dates to be considered for funding in the current cycle.

Funding is provided through a competitive process. [State-specific, ranking dates](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/) for all programs are available. Applications received after ranking dates will be automatically deferred to the next funding period.

**Program Options**

EQIP provides cost share assistance for producers to use 170-plus conservation practices to address a wide variety of resource concerns. Within EQIP, Conservation Incentive Contracts allow producers to further target priority resource concerns. CSP helps producers take their conservation activities to the next level through comprehensive conservation and advanced conservation activities. ACEP helps producers enroll wetlands, grasslands and farmlands into easements for long-term protection. Additionally, through RCPP, producers and landowners can work with partners who are co-investing with NRCS on targeted projects.

**Historically Underserved Producer Benefits**

Special provisions are also available for [historically underserved producers](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/). For EQIP, historically underserved producers are eligible for advance payments to help offset costs related to purchasing materials or contracting services up front. In addition, historically underserved producers can receive higher EQIP payment rates (up to 90% of average cost). NRCS sets aside EQIP, CSP and ACEP funds for historically underserved producers.

**Conservation Practices and Climate**

NRCS conservation programs play a critical role in USDA’s commitment to partnering with farmers, ranchers, forest landowners and local communities to deliver climate solutions that strengthen agricultural operations and rural America. States may prioritize a variety of voluntary conservation practices through these NRCS programs, including those that support climate-smart agriculture and forestry (CSAF).

In fiscal year 2022, EQIP and CSP will provide targeted funding for CSAF practices, and Conservation Incentive Contracts – a new EQIP program – will be available nationwide with an emphasis on CSAF practices. Building on
these efforts, NRCS will also prioritize climate investments through ACEP, RCPP and Conservation Innovation Grants.

Producers, landowners and forest managers interested in applying for assistance should contact the NRCS at their local USDA Service Center.

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