

Emergency Conservation Program

Overview

USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) provides emergency funding and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters and for implementing emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought. Funding for ECP is appropriated by Congress.

Program Administration

ECP is administered by FSA state and county committees. Subject to availability of funds, locally-elected county committees are authorized to implement ECP for all disasters except drought, which is authorized by the FSA national office.

Land Eligibility

FSA county committees determine land eligibility based on on-site inspections of damaged land. They consider the type and extent of damage. For land to be eligible, the natural disaster must create new conservation problems that, if untreated, would:

- Impair or endanger the land;
- Materially affect the land's productive capacity;
- Represent unusual damage which, except for wind erosion, is not the type likely to recur frequently in the same area; and
- Be so costly to repair that Federal assistance is or will be required to return the land to productive agricultural use.

Conservation problems existing before the applicable disaster event are ineligible for ECP assistance.

Payments

As determined by FSA county committees, ECP participants may receive cost-share assistance of up to 75 percent of the cost to implement approved emergency conservation practices. Qualified limited-resource producers receive cost-share assistance of up to 90 percent of the cost to implement approved emergency conservation practices.

Individual or cumulative requests for cost-share assistance of \$50,000 or less per person or legal entity, per disaster are approved at the county committee level. Cost-share assistance requests exceeding \$50,000 require approval from the state committee or national office level. Cost-share assistance is limited to \$200,000 per person or legal entity, per disaster.

Technical assistance may be provided by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Emergency Conservation Practices

To rehabilitate farmland, ECP participants may implement emergency conservation practices such as:

- Debris removal from farmland;
- Restoring livestock fences and conservation structures; and
- Providing water for livestock during periods of severe drought.

Other conservation measures may be authorized by FSA county committees, with approval from FSA state committees and the FSA national office.

Sign-up Periods

Producers should inquire with their local FSA county office regarding ECP sign-up periods, which are established by FSA county committees.

For More Information

More information on ECP is available at FSA offices and on FSA's Web site at: <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>

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