

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Farm Programs

Phone: 501-301-3050

EIGHT NEW DISASTER PROGRAMS TO HELP PRODUCERS RECOVER FROM HURRICANES OF 2005 ANNOUNCED

Sign-up Begins December 11 for Six Programs

Little Rock, AR, Dec. 7, 2006 - Eight new disaster programs to help farmers and ranchers in Arkansas who suffered losses due to Hurricane Rita in 2005 was announced by Dotson Collins, USDA Farm Service Agency State Executive Director. Sign-up begins Dec. 11, 2006, for six of the programs.

"This disaster assistance provides \$220 million in new funds for producers devastated by last year's hurricanes," said Collins. "It provides programs from livestock to citrus to nursery operations and is in addition to \$1.2 billion in disaster programs announced earlier this year."

The Emergency Agricultural Disaster Assistance Act of 2006 (the Act), enacted in June 2006, authorizes the eight programs. Under the Act, USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) will provide payments to eligible producers in certain counties of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will administer the funds on behalf of CCC.

Eligible counties are those declared primary natural disaster areas or designated a major disaster or emergency for 2005 calendar-year hurricanes Katrina, Ophelia, Wilma or Rita. Counties contiguous to a primary county are also eligible. The Act did not include counties declared disaster areas by Hurricane Dennis. Program fact sheets include the list of eligible counties, as well as program details, and can be found online at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>, click on Disaster Assistance Programs. Eligible Arkansas Counties include: Ashley, Chicot, Columbia, Crittenden, Desha, Lafayette, Lee, Miller, Phillips, St. Francis, and Union. To receive benefits, producers must meet other eligibility requirements.

Farmers, ranchers and growers can apply for the following new programs beginning Dec. 11, 2006, at local FSA offices and USDA Service Centers.

- 2005 Hurricanes Livestock Compensation Program provides payments to livestock owners and cash lessees for certain feed losses.
- 2005 Hurricanes Livestock Indemnity Program II provides benefits to livestock owners and contract growers for certain livestock deaths.
- 2005 Hurricanes Citrus Program provides benefits to citrus producers who suffered citrus crop production losses and associated fruit-bearing tree damage, including related clean-up and rehabilitation costs.
- 2005 Hurricanes Fruit and Vegetable Program provides benefits to producers who suffered fruit and vegetable crop production losses, including related clean-up costs.

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- 2005 Hurricanes Tropical Fruit Program provides benefits to producers of carambola, longan, lychee and mangos who suffered tropical fruit production losses.
- 2005 Hurricanes Nursery Program provides benefits to commercial ornamental nursery and fernery producers who suffered inventory losses and incurred clean-up costs.

The other two disaster programs unveiled today are the 2005 Hurricanes Tree Assistance Program (TAP) and the 2005 Catfish Grant Program.

- TAP will provide payments to eligible owners of commercially grown Christmas trees, ornamental trees, nursery trees, potted trees, bushes (including shrubs) and vines that were lost or damaged due to 2005 hurricanes. USDA expects to announce the TAP sign-up period in the near future.
- Under the 2005 Catfish Grant Program, USDA will provide grants to states having catfish producers who suffered catfish feed losses. USDA will not administer the grant program. Governors or their designees will announce sign-up dates and application procedures for the catfish feed loss program and distribute program payments.

USDA understands that some producers may have little documentation of their losses due to hurricane devastation; however, USDA will require producers to provide all available documentation. Producers may not receive payments made under other federal programs for the same losses.

Early this year, USDA announced \$2.8 billion in aid to assist victims of the 2005 hurricane season. USDA provided approximately \$1.2 billion of those funds through nine disaster programs. Details about these and other disaster programs are available at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>, click on Disaster Assistance Programs.

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