



USDA Announces Disaster Program Flexibilities to Help Louisiana Crawfish Producers Impacted by Extreme Heat in 2023

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Louisiana

WASHINGTON, May 10, 2024 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) has authorized policy flexibilities for the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybee, and Farm-Raised Fish Program](#) (ELAP) to help commercial crawfish producers in Louisiana recover from the impacts of extreme heat conditions in 2023 - heat that subsequently devastated 2024 crawfish production in many crawfish producing parishes in Louisiana. FSA is now accepting ELAP applications from eligible commercial crawfish producers.

ELAP provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybee, and farm-raised fish who suffer losses because of qualifying disease, adverse weather or other conditions. The assistance provided under ELAP for farm-raised fish losses include physical loss and feed loss.

"When we make farm policy decisions, we recognize that not all agricultural commodities are grown or raised the same or fit in nice, neat categories as it relates to how we deliver our programs. Such is the case with crawfish production," said FSA Administrator Zach Ducheneaux. "We're updating our program to provide crawfish disaster recovery assistance. This announcement is another example of how the Farm Service Agency continues to follow through on our obligation to improve programs. We're committed to doing the homework required to understand the variety of agricultural commodities and their unique needs; we talk to industry experts, revisit and rethink our policies, and do what we can, within our authority, to help all producers survive and thrive. This is even more important following extreme weather events that can have catastrophic multi-year and even generational impacts on family farming operations."

Eligible Cause of Loss

Extreme heat is considered an ELAP-eligible loss condition and in 2023, according to Louisiana State University (LSU) weather data, "normal" temperature ranges compiled from historical data from 1991 to 2020 indicate that from June through October 2023, temperatures in Louisiana generally exceeded the normal range and approached or established the record maximum values for any particular date throughout the timeframe. Based on this data, the losses Louisiana commercial crawfish producers suffered in 2023 can be primarily attributed to extreme heat, with drought as a secondary cause of loss.

Inventory and Production Records Flexibilities

ELAP policy requires producers to provide a beginning and ending inventory record. But, due to the unique crawfish production systems, this is an almost impossible ask of producers. To meet the needs of crawfish producers, FSA is implementing ELAP inventory and production records flexibilities that offer options for producers who have records and for those who don't; allowing all commercial crawfish producers an opportunity to apply for ELAP assistance.

Under current ELAP policy, for program payments to be calculated for farm-raised fish losses, commercial crawfish producers must provide FSA with historical production data for 2021 to 2023. For producers who cannot provide the required production records, FSA will assign production values based on county expected yields from an Olympic average of the previous five years in that parish. Crawfish production is maintained in pounds/surface acre by each producer. LSU maintains the information with parish and state averages. These averages were used in 2021 to establish a county expected yield for each parish.

Calculating Payments

Depending on the availability of producer records, ELAP payments will be calculated by taking the established beginning inventory three-year average production history (or the county expected yield) per surface acre of water, certified on the FSA-578 *Report of Acreage* form, minus the current year's production records.

More Information??

For additional ELAP information or to apply for program assistance, producers can contact the FSA office located in their local [USDA Service Center](#). ?

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit [usda.gov](https://www.usda.gov).???

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