



USDA Approves Emergency Conservation Program for Agricultural Producers in West Virginia Impacted by Drought

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West Virginia

MORGANTOWN, W.Va., Oct. 1, 2024 - U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) today announced that all West Virginia counties are accepting applications for the [Emergency Conservation Program](#) (ECP) for producers impacted by drought. Signup for ECP in approved counties starts Oct. 9, 2024, and ends Nov. 15, 2024.

"Recovering from the impacts of natural disasters is never easy, but there's no need to go it alone," said John D. Perdue, State Executive Director for FSA in West Virginia. "If you have an immediate need for drought recovery assistance, we're ready to help but it's imperative that you call our office to determine program eligibility and obtain a conservation plan and practice approval before you take any action."

ECP is a performance-based cost-share program that provides funding and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers to implement emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought.

Eligible ECP drought practices include:

- Providing emergency water during periods of severe drought for grazing and confined livestock;
- Providing emergency water during periods of severe drought for existing irrigation systems for orchards and vineyards; and
- Portable water pumps for livestock.

FSA county committees will evaluate ECP applications based on a conservation plan developed in consultation with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service. A conservation plan does not guarantee that cost-share funding will be provided.

Producers impacted by drought must apply for ECP assistance before beginning work. FSA's National Environmental Policy Act and environmental compliance review process must be completed before any drought recovery actions are taken. Submitting an application after work has been completed may not qualify for ECP.

FSA is authorized to provide advance payments, up to 25% of the approved cost share, upon the producer's request. The advance cost-share payment must be expended within 60 days from receipt. ECP assistance is reimbursed at no more than 75% of allowable cost after the approved recovery activity is complete. Producers who are considered limited resource, socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers and ranchers can receive up to 90% cost-share.

The 2018 Farm Bill increased the payment limitation for ECP to \$500,000 per natural disaster event.

More Information

Additional USDA disaster assistance information can be found on [farmers.gov](https://www.farmers.gov), including USDA resources specifically for producers impacted by drought. Available resources include the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#), and [Loan Assistance Tool](#). Additionally, FarmRaise offers an [FSA educational hub](#) with livestock disaster assistance decision tools as well as farm loan resource videos. For more information [local USDA Service Center](#).

FSA helps America's farmers, ranchers and forest landowners invest in, improve, protect and expand their agricultural operations through the delivery of agricultural programs for all Americans. FSA implements agricultural policy, administers credit and loan programs, and manages conservation, commodity, disaster recovery and marketing programs through a national network of state and county offices and locally elected county committees. For more information, visit fsa.usda.gov.

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.

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