



USDA's Farm Service Agency to Host Nov. 25 Disaster Assistance Webinar for Florida Producers Impacted by Recent Hurricanes

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GAINESVILLE, Fla., Nov. 18, 2024 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Florida invites farmers, ranchers and forest landowners who were impacted by recent hurricanes to participate in a webinar focused on available FSA disaster recovery resources.

"The Farm Service Agency is here to help Florida agriculture recover from damages caused by hurricanes Debby, Helene and Milton," said Deborah Tannenbaum, FSA State Executive Director in Florida. "USDA offers a suite of programs to help, and we're also offering program flexibilities to streamline and expedite the recovery process."

The webinar is Monday, Nov. 25, 2024, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Eastern. Participants can join the meeting [using this link](#) or can dial in at +1 (202) 650-0123, entering the phone conference identification number: 455 162 563#.

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to participate in this meeting should contact Savanna Danver at (352) 338-3434 or dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunication relay services.

FSA Disaster Assistance to be Discussed

FSA has added flexibilities to several programs due to hurricanes Debby, Helene and Milton. Brief descriptions of a few of the programs that will be discussed during the webinar are provided below. A full list of available programs and flexibilities can be found at farmers.gov/hurricane.

To help expedite farmland and private forestland rehabilitation assistance through the [Emergency Conservation Program](#) (ECP) and [Emergency Forest Restoration Program](#) (EFRP), FSA has taken the following measures:

- Extended the ECP signup deadline to June 1, 2025, in states affected by hurricanes Debby, Helene and Milton.
- Executed Emergency Response (ER-850) authorization of emergency National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) circumstances to expedite FSA approval of practices involving surface debris removal, fence restoration and non-ground disturbing activities.
- Waiver of onsite inspection requirement for non-engineering practices for ECP and EFRP.
- Waiver of requirement for producers to obtain prior approval to conduct surface debris removal, fence repair and hazard tree removal to support critical disaster recovery efforts. Producers should contact FSA for any questions on allowable activities.

Additionally, the [Livestock Indemnity Program](#) (LIP) provides benefits to livestock owners and contract growers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by eligible loss conditions including

eligible adverse weather. FSA has issued guidance to FSA County Committees and local staff to exercise maximum flexibility in determining acceptable loss documentation and to ensure LIP applications are acted on timely.

Through the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program](#) (ELAP), FSA provides assistance to owners of livestock, and producers of honeybees and farm-raised fish for feed and death losses due to an eligible natural disaster event. FSA is providing assistance to help cover above normal costs to transport livestock to feed, transport feed/forage to livestock, and haul water to livestock in hurricane-impacted states, and assistance to help.

The [Tree Assistance Program](#) (TAP) provides financial cost-share assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or, where applicable, rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines lost by natural disasters. FSA has extended assistance to trees, bushes and vines that have not died but are no longer capable of production (not economically viable). This assistance program complements the [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](#) (NAP), or federal crop insurance coverage, which covers the crop but not the plants or trees in all cases.

Under NAP, FSA has waived the 72-hour notification requirement on hand harvested crops, extended the deadline to file a Notice of Loss, and provided flexibility for FSA staff to perform loss adjustment activities and/or waive field inspections in cases where the cause of loss can be verified through other means. Producers with federal crop insurance should contact their crop insurance agent.

FSA also offers a variety of [direct and guaranteed farm loans](#), including [operating](#) and [emergency farm loans](#), to producers unable to secure commercial financing. Producers in counties with a primary or contiguous disaster designation may be eligible for low-interest emergency loans to help them recover from production and physical losses. Loans can help producers replace essential property, purchase inputs, livestock, equipment, feed and seed, cover family living expenses or refinance farm-related debts and other farm needs. FSA also offers several loan servicing options, including the [Disaster Set-Aside Program](#), for borrowers who are unable to make scheduled payments on their farm loan programs debt to the agency because of reasons beyond their control.

More Information

USDA offers a suite of programs to help your ag operation recover from recent hurricanes. FSA, along with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Risk Management Agency (RMA), are ready to assist impacted producers and have added flexibilities to disaster assistance programs to streamline the recovery process. Learn more at farmers.gov/hurricane.

For more information on FSA disaster resources, please contact your [local County FSA office](#).

USDA disaster assistance information can be found on farmers.gov, including the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#), [Loan Assistance Tool](#), and [Natural Disasters and Crop Insurance fact sheet](#). Additionally, FarmRaise offers an [FSA educational hub](#) with LIP and ELAP decision tools as well as farm loan resource videos.

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