USDA's Farm Service Agency Reminds Wisconsin Dairy Producers of Available Blizzard Recovery Assistance

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Report Crop, Livestock and Infrastructure Notices of Loss

Wisconsin

(Madison, Wisc. - March 17, 2026) - Dairy producers in Wisconsin impacted by the winter storm and blizzard conditions beginning March 14 are strongly encouraged to report crop, livestock and infrastructure related losses to the local USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) and inquire about available disaster recovery assistance. Winter storms and blizzard conditions create serious challenges for dairy producers, affecting livestock health, feed supplies, transportation and daily milk production.

"Milk can't wait. When trucks can't reach farms or processors on time, producers face costly delays and, in some cases, must dispose of milk that can't be stored. Those disruptions coupled with livestock losses create real economic consequences for Wisconsin dairy operations," said Sandy Chalmers, FSA State Executive Director in Wisconsin. "We recognize the significant economic strain these adverse weather events place on a producer's bottom line. As part of the commitment by the Trump Administration and Secretary Brooke Rollins to put Farmers First, FSA is focused on ensuring producers receive timely disaster assistance when extreme weather impacts their operations. Reporting storm-related losses helps us quickly initiate a disaster designation and move forward with recovery support for Wisconsin dairy producers."

Producers who experience livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality or sell injured livestock at a reduced price may be eligible for the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP). To participate in LIP, producers will have to provide acceptable documentation of death losses or evidence of reduced sales resulting from an eligible adverse event, including an adverse weather event, and must submit a notice of loss to FSA no later than March 1, 2027, for 2026 calendar year losses.

For LIP eligibility, producers should keep good records of livestock losses or animals sold at a reduced price. Documentation must include sufficient data that identifies the quantity and the livestock kind, type, and weight range. For loss documentation details, review the LIP Verifiable and Reliable Documentation fact sheet.

Meanwhile, the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) provides eligible producers with compensation for feed and grazing losses. ELAP also includes costs associated with equipment rental fees for hay lifts and snow removal. For ELAP, producers are required to complete a notice of loss and application for payment to their local FSA office no later than March 1, 2027, for 2026 calendar year losses.

Producers with NAP coverage should report crop damage to their local FSA office and must file a Notice of Loss (CCC-576) within 15 days of the loss becoming apparent.

The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFL) provides low-interest financing so producers can build, repair, replace or upgrade facilities to store commodities (including hay storage facilities). Loan terms vary from three to 12 years. Producers who incurred damage to or loss of their equipment or infrastructure funded by the FSFL program should contact their insurance agent and their local USDA Service Center. Producers in need of on-farm storage should also contact USDA.

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 like livestock, equipment, feed and seed, cover family living expenses or refinance farm-related debts and other needs.

Additionally, FSA offers several loan servicing options available 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 USDA disaster assistance information can be found online, including USDA resources specifically for producers impacted by winter weather. Resources include 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. For FSA and NRCS programs, producers should contact their local USDA Service Center.

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