



USDA Offers Disaster Assistance to Oregon Farmers and Livestock Producers Impacted by Wildfires

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PORTLAND, Oregon, Sept. 14, 2020 - Oregon agricultural and forestry operations have been significantly impacted by the wildfires, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has technical and financial assistance available to help farmers, livestock producers, and private forest landowners recover. As agricultural producers move into recovery mode and assess damages, they should contact their local USDA Service Center to report losses and learn more about program options available to assist in their recovery from crop, land, infrastructure and livestock losses and damages.

"Oregon agricultural producers are vital to the state's economy, and FSA stands ready to assist in their recovery from these wildfires," said Josh Hanning, acting state executive director for USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Oregon. "Once you are able to safely evaluate the impact on your operation, be sure to contact your local FSA office to timely report all damages and losses."

USDA encourages farmers and livestock producers to contact the FSA county office at the local USDA Service Center to learn which documents should be provided to help the local office expedite assistance, such as farm records, receipts and pictures of damages or losses.

Depending on the operation, FSA offers a number of disaster assistance programs to help offset eligible losses, including the [Livestock Indemnity Program](#), [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program](#), [Emergency Conservation Program](#), [Emergency Forest Restoration Program](#), [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](#), [Tree Assistance Program](#) and [Livestock Forage Disaster Program](#).

Additionally, producers located 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.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) also offers programs to help in the recovery process. The [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) can be used to provide resource protection for areas burned by catastrophic fires. Benefits include preventing soil erosion, minimizing the spread of noxious and invasive plants, revegetating burned areas, removing excess dead vegetation, protecting water quality and restoring livestock infrastructure necessary for grazing management.

Producers with Federal crop insurance coverage should contact their [crop insurance agent](#) for assistance. Producers should report crop damage to their agent within 72 hours of damage discovery and follow up in writing within 15 days.

"We can't predict when natural disasters will occur, but crop insurance can provide a safety net for Oregon farmers and livestock producers when disaster strikes," said Ben Thiel, director of RMA's Regional Office in Spokane, Wash., that covers Oregon. "Our approved insurance providers, loss adjusters and agents are experienced and well trained when it comes to disaster recovery and are ready to assist impacted producers. For additional information about wildfire impact to grapes, visit RMA's [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Assistance for Communities

Additional NRCS programs include the [Emergency Watershed Protection \(EWP\)](#) program, a federal emergency recovery program that helps local communities recover after a natural disaster strikes. The program offers technical and financial assistance to help local communities relieve imminent threats to life and property caused by floods, fires, windstorms and other natural disasters that impair a watershed. When a watershed impairment occurs due to a natural disaster event, the district conservationist serves as the local facilitator for EWP activities. Eligible sponsors include cities, counties, towns, conservation districts or any federally recognized Native American tribe or tribal organization.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is the lead federal agency for Presidentially declared natural disasters. All NRCS emergency work is coordinated with FEMA or its designee. Sponsors must submit a formal request (via mail or email) to the state conservationist for assistance within 60 days of the natural disaster occurrence or 60 days from the date when access to the sites become available. For more information, please contact Molly Dawson at molly.dawson@usda.gov or (503) 414-3234.

In addition to EWP, [Conservation Technical Assistance \(CTA\)](#) is another valuable service that NRCS can provide following a wildfire. NRCS technical assistance can help fire victims with planning cost-effective post fire restoration practices.

Additional Time to Apply for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program

FSA has reopened the application period for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) until Oct. 9, 2020, for producers in the following fire-impacted counties of Washington, Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook, Clackamas, Multnomah, Yamhill, Marion, Polk, Linn, Benton, Lincoln, Lane, Douglas, Coos,

Curry, Jackson, Josephine, and Klamath Falls counties in Oregon. FSA is only reopening CFAP for areas impacted by recent wildfires.

CFAP provides direct relief to producers who faced price declines and additional marketing costs due to COVID-19. Over 160 commodities are eligible for CFAP, including certain non-specialty crops, livestock, dairy, wool, specialty crops, eggs, aquaculture, and nursery crops and cut flowers. All eligible commodities, payment rates, and calculations can be found on farmers.gov/cfap.

Customers seeking one-on-one support with the CFAP application process can call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer general assistance. This is a recommended first step before a producer engages the FSA county office at their local USDA Service Center.

More Information

Producers and landowners can use the online [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool, answering five questions](#) to identify USDA programs that will help meet disaster recovery needs. Customers can also download a copy of the new [Disaster At A Glance brochure](#).

For more information on all USDA disaster assistance programs, visit farmers.gov/recover, or contact your local USDA Service Center, which can be found at farmers.gov/service-center-locator. For assistance with a crop insurance claim, please contact your [crop insurance agent](#).

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