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## USDA Offers Disaster Assistance to Farmers and Livestock Producers in Louisiana, Mississippi and Surrounding States Impacted by Hurricane Zeta

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Louisiana

**Alexandria, La., Nov. 9, 2020** - Hurricane Zeta's flooding and high winds impacted agricultural operations in Louisiana, Mississippi and surrounding states, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has technical and financial assistance available to help farmers and livestock producers 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.

"2020 has been an unprecedented year for storms making landfall in Louisiana and in neighboring States along the Gulf Coast," said Craig McCain, state executive director for USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Louisiana. "These storms have left a wide swath of damage in their wake and I'm glad that FSA has a strong portfolio of disaster assistance programs available to help farmers and ranchers recover from Mother Nature's wrath."

USDA encourages farmers and ranchers 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 \(NAP\)](#) and [Tree Assistance 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 \(EQIP\)](#) can help producers plan and implement conservation practices on land impacted by natural disasters.

"NRCS can be a very valuable partner to help landowners with their recovery efforts," said Chad Kacir, state conservationist for the NRCS in Louisiana. "Our staff will work one-on-one with landowners to make assessments of the damages and develop approaches that focus on effective recovery of the

land."

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.

"Crop insurance is there to help producers manage risk because we never know what nature has in store for the future," said Roddric Bell, director of RMA's Regional Office that covers Louisiana and Mississippi. "The Approved Insurance Providers, loss adjusters and agents are experienced and well trained in handling these types of events."

## Assistance for Communities

Additional NRCS programs include the [Emergency Watershed Protection \(EWP\)](#) program, which provides assistance to local government sponsors with the cost of addressing watershed impairments or hazards such as debris removal and streambank stabilization. Eligible sponsors include cities, counties, towns, conservation districts or any federally recognized Native American tribe or tribal organization. When a watershed impairment occurs due to a natural disaster event, the district conservationist serves as the local facilitator for EWP activities. 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 Britt Paul, Assistant State Conservationist for Water Resources, at [britt.paul@usda.gov](mailto:britt.paul@usda.gov).

## 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.

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

All USDA Service Centers are open for business, including some that are open to visitors to conduct business in person by appointment only. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, or any other Service Center agency should call ahead and schedule an appointment. Service Centers that are open for appointments will pre-screen

visitors based on health concerns or recent travel, and visitors must adhere to social distancing guidelines. Visitors are required to wear a face covering during their appointment. Field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. Our program delivery staff will be in the office, and they will be working with our producers in office, by phone, and using online tools. More information can be found at [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

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