



USDA Assists Farmers, Ranchers, and Communities Affected by Recent Flooding in Tennessee

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WASHINGTON, August 27, 2021 - To help residents, farmers, and ranchers affected by the recent flooding in Tennessee, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has directed the [U.S. Department of Agriculture \(USDA\)](#) to aid recovery efforts. USDA staff in the regional, state, and county offices are responding and providing a variety of program flexibilities and other assistance to residents, agricultural producers and impacted communities.

Food safety guidance:

USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is helping affected residents take steps to reduce their risk of foodborne illness as they return to their homes after severe weather and flooding.

- Drink only bottled water that has not been in contact with flood water. Screw caps are not waterproof, so discard any bottled water that may have come in contact with flood water. If you don't have bottled water, learn how to safely boil or disinfect water at [FSIS Consumer's Guide to Food Safety: Severe Storms and Hurricanes webpage](#).
- Discard any food or beverage that is not in a waterproof container if there is any chance it may have been in contact with flood water. Containers with screw caps, snap lids, pull tops and crimped caps are not waterproof.
- Undamaged, commercially prepared foods in all-metal cans and retort pouches such as flexible, shelf-stable juice or seafood pouches, can be saved by following the steps at the [FSIS Consumer's Guide to Food Safety: Severe Storms and Hurricanes webpage](#).
- Thoroughly wash all metal pans, utensils and ceramic dishes that came in contact with flood water with hot soapy water. Rinse, then sanitize, by boiling them in clean water or by immersing them for 15 minutes in a solution of one of tablespoon unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of drinking water.
- Discard wooden cutting boards, plastic utensils, baby bottle nipples and pacifiers that may have come in contact with flood water
 - they cannot be saved after contact with flood water.

Risk management and disaster assistance for agricultural operations:

USDA offers several risk management and disaster assistance options to help producers recover after disasters.

Producers who suffer losses and whose crops are covered for the 2021 crop year by the [Federal Crop Insurance Program](#), a partnership between USDA's Risk Management Agency and private companies and agents, or the [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program \(NAP\)](#), administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), are asked to report crop damage to their crop insurance agent or local FSA office, respectively, within 72 hours of discovering damage and to follow up in writing within 15 days.

Livestock and perennial crop producers often have more limited risk management options available, so there are several disaster programs for them. Key programs offered by FSA include:

- The [Livestock Indemnity Program](#) and the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybee and Farm-raised Fish Program](#) reimburses producers for a portion of the value of livestock, poultry and other animals that were killed or severely injured by a natural disaster or loss of feed and grazing acres.
- The [Tree Assistance Program](#) provides cost share assistance to rehabilitate or replant orchards and vineyards when storms kill or damage the trees, vines or bushes. NAP or Federal Crop Insurance often only covers the crop and not the plant.
- The [Emergency Conservation Program](#) and the [Emergency Forest Restoration Program](#) can assist landowners and forest stewards with financial and technical assistance to restore damaged farmland or forests.
- FSA also offers a variety of direct and guaranteed [farm loans](#), including operating and emergency farm loans, to producers unable to secure commercial financing. 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.

It is also critical that producers keep accurate records to document damage or loss and to report losses to their local USDA Service Center as soon as possible.

Additionally, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service can provide financial resources through its [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) to help with immediate needs and long-term support to help recover from natural disasters and conserve water resources. USDA can also assist local government sponsors with the cost of recovery efforts like debris removal and streambank stabilization to address natural resource concerns and hazards through the [Emergency Watershed Protection Program](#).

On farmers.gov, the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster Assistance-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#) (PDF, 4.6 MB) and [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#) can help producers and landowners determine program or loan options. For assistance with a crop insurance claim, producers and landowners should contact their [crop insurance agent](#). For FSA and NRCS programs, they should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#).

Other USDA assistance:

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has information about [Protecting Livestock During a Disaster](#) and is also helping to meet the emergency needs of pets and their owners. Inspectors are coordinating closely with zoos, breeders, and other licensed facilities in the region to ensure the safety of animals in their care.

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is standing by to work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), as well as requesting states and local authorities, to provide [emergency nutrition assistance](#) and other nutrition program flexibilities to assist people in need.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In 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 www.usda.gov.

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