USDA Has Issued More Than $4 Billion in Emergency Relief Program Payments to Date

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Deadline to Submit Applications is Friday, July 22

WASHINGTON, June 29, 2022 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that to date, agricultural producers have already received more than $4 billion through the Emergency Relief Program (ERP), representing approximately 67% of the more than $6 billion projected to be paid through this first phase of the program. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) mailed out pre-filled applications in late May to producers with crop insurance who suffered losses due to natural disasters in 2020 and 2021. Commodity and specialty crop producers have until July 22 to complete applications.

"We recognize the financial recovery need is great and worked deliberately to create a program delivery process that would ensure quick payments to producers," Vilsack said. "I am extremely proud to share that the strategically streamlined ERP application and program implementation process have yielded the desired results - reduced burdens on and expedited payment to approximately 120,000 disaster-impacted agricultural producers, to date."

USDA is implementing ERP and ELRP in two phases, with the first phase utilizing existing claim data to provide relief expediently, and the second phase focusing on ensuring producers not covered by other programs receive assistance. For phase one, USDA used crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) claim data.

Both ERP and the previously announced Emergency Livestock Relief Program (ELRP) are funded by the *Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act*, which President Biden signed into law in 2021. The law provided $10 billion to help agricultural producers impacted by wildfires, droughts, hurricanes, winter storms and other eligible disasters experienced during calendar years 2020 and 2021, of which $750 million is committed to livestock producers who experienced losses to drought or wildfire in calendar year 2021. Eligible livestock producers received ELRP payments totaling more than $590 million since the program was rolled out in late March.

Pre-Filled Applications

Eligible producers with eligible crop insurance claims have received pre-filled applications, which included eligibility requirements and payment calculations. Producers received a separate application form for each program year in which they experienced an eligible loss.

Producers should check with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) at their local USDA Service Center to confirm eligibility and to ensure that all required farm program participation, adjusted gross income and conservation compliance forms are on file. Producers who have previously participated in FSA programs likely have these required forms already on file.

ERP provisions allow for a higher payment percentage for historically underserved producers, including beginning, limited resource, socially disadvantaged and military veteran producers. To qualify for the higher payment rate, individuals must have a Form CCC-860, *Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification* on file.

To receive a payment, producers must complete and submit their forms by the July 22 deadline. Once the completed ERP application for payment is submitted to and signed by the FSA, producers enrolled in direct deposit should look for their payment within three business days.

Additional Assistance through Phase One

FSA will be sending pre-filled applications for about 9,000 eligible producers with NAP coverage in mid-July.

The Federal crop insurance data used to populate ERP phase one pre-filled applications included claim data on file with USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) as of May 2, 2022. At that time, claim data for the Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO), Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO), Stacked Income Protection Plan (STAX), Margin Protection Plan (MP) or Area Risk Protection Insurance (ARPI) were not complete, so crop/units including these coverage options were not included in the pre-filled ERP application form. In late summer 2022, updated claim information will be used to generate a second pre-filled application for those crop/units with eligible losses on file with RMA not included in the first mailing.

More Information

ERP covers losses to crops, trees, bushes and vines due to a qualifying natural disaster event in calendar years 2020 and 2021. Eligible crops include all crops for which crop insurance or NAP coverage was available, except for crops intended for grazing. Qualifying natural disaster events include wildfires, hurricanes, floods, derechos, excessive heat, winter storms, freeze (including a polar vortex), smoke exposure, excessive moisture, qualifying drought and related conditions.

All producers who receive ERP phase one payments are statutorily required to purchase crop insurance or NAP coverage where crop insurance is not available for the next two available crop years.

Producers should contact their local Service Center if they have questions. Additionally, other resources include:

- ERP fact sheet
- ERP Webpage
- May 16, 2022, news release

The second phase of both ERP and ELRP will be aimed at filling gaps and providing assistance to producers who did not participate in or receive payments through the existing programs that are being leveraged for phase one implementation. Through proactive communication and outreach, USDA will keep producers and stakeholders informed as program details are made available.

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

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