



## USDA Extends Deadline for Emergency Conservation Program Applications from Florida Producers in 28 Counties

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Contact: [FPAC.BC.Press@usda.gov](mailto:FPAC.BC.Press@usda.gov)

*Funding Available to Help Restore Lands to Pre-Hurricane Condition, Replace or Repair Fencing*

**GAINESVILLE, Fla. March 27, 2023** - The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has extended the deadline for applications from agricultural producers for the [Emergency Conservation Program](#) (ECP) to address damages from Hurricane Ian. The application deadline has been extended to **May 22, 2023**.

"We understand the extent of the damage caused by Hurricane Ian and the catastrophic and widespread impacts in Florida's agricultural communities," said Deborah Tannenbaum, State Executive Director for the Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Florida. "Through disaster assistance programs like ECP, we can provide critical financial assistance to help alleviate some economic stressors brought on by the hurricane, restore infrastructure and help impacted agricultural operations move forward and build resiliency following this disastrous storm."

ECP provides financial assistance to producers to help them restore their farmland to pre-disaster conditions. Approved ECP applicants may receive up to 75 percent of the cost of an approved restoration activity. Limited resource producers, socially disadvantaged participants and beginning farmers and ranchers may receive up to 90 percent cost-share. The payment limitation for ECP is \$500,000 per disaster event.

The approved counties for ECP signup are Brevard, Broward, Charlotte, Clay, Collier, DeSoto, Flagler, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Hillsborough, Indian River, Lake, Lee, Manatee, Martin, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Palm Beach, Polk, Putnam, Sarasota, Seminole, St. Johns, St. Lucie, and Volusia.

The approved ECP practices under this authorization for Hurricane Ian recovery include:

- Removing debris from farmland;
- Grading, shaping, releveling, or similar measures;
- Replacing or repairing permanent fences; and

- Restoring conservation structures and other installations

Hurricane-impacted producers must apply for assistance and receive written approval prior to beginning restoration work. Restoration work initiated prior to written approval may not qualify for ECP assistance.

FSA county committees will evaluate applications based on an applicant's estimates or measurements of the damaged land, taking into consideration the type and extent of the damage. On-site visits will only be required for conservation structures. Submitting an application does not guarantee that cost-share funding will be provided.

The use of ECP funds is limited to activities to return the land to the relative pre-disaster condition. Conservation concerns that were present on the land prior to the disaster are not eligible for ECP assistance.

### **More Information**

In addition to ECP, USDA offers a full suite of disaster assistance programs to help Florida producers recover from Hurricane Ian. Information about these programs is provided in [USDA's Hurricane Ian recovery news release](#) issued on Oct. 14, 2022.

On [farmers.gov](#), the [Hurricane resources webpage](#), [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster Assistance-at-a-Glance](#) fact sheet, and [Loan Assistance 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](#).

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 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](#).

### **Farm Service Agency:**

1400 Independence Ave.  
SW Washington, DC 20250

**Contact:**

FPAC Press Desk

[FPAC.BC.Press@usda.gov](mailto:FPAC.BC.Press@usda.gov)