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

News Release |
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|
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SPOKANE, Wash., Aug. 20, 2021 — Agricultural operations in Washington have been significantly impacted by the wildfires and ongoing, severe drought. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has technical and financial assistance available to help farmers and livestock producers recover. Impacted producers 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.

“Production agriculture is vital to the state’s economy, and USDA stands ready to assist in the recovery from these wildfires and extreme drought conditions,” said Gloria Montañó Greene as Deputy Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC). “I assure you that USDA employees are working diligently to deliver FPAC’s extensive portfolio of disaster assistance programs and services to all impacted agricultural producers.”

USDA Disaster Assistance for Wildfire and Drought Recovery

Producers who experience livestock deaths due to wildfires and extreme heat (based on actual temperature and varies by state) may be eligible for the [Livestock Indemnity Program](#) (LIP).

Meanwhile, for both wildfire and drought recovery, the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program](#) (ELAP) provides eligible producers with compensation for feed losses as well as water hauling expenses associated with transportation of water to livestock. For ELAP, producers will need to file a notice of loss within 30 days and honeybee losses within 15 days.

Livestock producers may also be eligible for the [Livestock Forage Disaster Program](#) (LFP) for 2021 grazing losses due to drought. LFP benefits may be available for loss of grazing acres due to wildfires on federally managed lands on which a producer is prohibited, by a federal agency, from grazing normally permitted livestock. FSA maintains a list of [counties eligible for LFP](#) and makes updates each Thursday.

Additionally, eligible orchardists and nursery tree growers may be eligible for cost-share assistance through the [Tree Assistance Program](#) (TAP) to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes or vines lost during the drought. This complements [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](#) (NAP) or crop insurance coverage, which covers the crop but not the plants or trees in all cases. For TAP, a program application must be filed within 90 days.

FSA also offers a variety of direct and guaranteed [farm loans](#), including operating and emergency farm loans, to producers unable to secure commercial financing. Producers 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. 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.

Risk Management

Producers who have risk protection through Federal Crop Insurance or FSA's NAP should report crop damage to their crop insurance agent or FSA office. If they have crop insurance, producers should report crop damage to their agent within 72 hours of initial discovery of damage and follow up in writing within 15 days. For NAP covered crops, a Notice of Loss (CCC-576) must be filed within 15 days of the loss becoming apparent, except for hand-harvested crops, which should be reported within 72 hours.

Conservation

Outside of the [primary nesting season](#), emergency and non-emergency haying and grazing of [Conservation Reserve Program](#) (CRP) acres may be authorized to provide relief to livestock producers in areas affected by a severe drought or similar natural disaster. Producers interested in haying or grazing of CRP acres should contact their county FSA office to determine eligibility.

The [Emergency Conservation Program](#) and [Emergency Forest Restoration Program](#) can assist landowners and forest stewards with financial and technical assistance to restore fencing, damaged farmland or forests.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is always available to provide technical assistance in the recovery process by assisting producers to plan and implement conservation practices on farms, ranches and working forests impacted by natural disasters.

Long-term damage from wildfires and drought includes forage production loss in pastures and fields and increased wind erosion on crop fields not protected with soil health practices. Visit your local USDA Service Center to learn more about these impacts, potential recovery tactics, and how to take steps to make your land more resilient to drought in the future.

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 damaged upland sites stripped of vegetation by wildfire, debris removal and streambank stabilization.

Eligible sponsors include cities, counties, towns, or any federally recognized Native American tribe or tribal organization. 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 your local NRCS office](#).

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.

More Information

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

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 www.usda.gov.

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Risk Management Agency:

11707 E Sprague Ave, Suite 304 Spokane, WA 99206-6125
Ben Thiel, Director

Contact:

FPAC Press Desk
FPAC.BC.Press@usda.gov