

## **MGR-22-003**

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Date

April 5, 2022

To

All Approved Insurance Providers

All Risk Management Agency Field Offices

All Other Interested Parties

From

Marcia Bunger, Administrator

Subject

2022 Freeze Damage to Blueberries in Alabama, Georgia, and North Carolina

## **Background**

Severe freeze events throughout the Southeastern United States in March 2022 resulted in significant damage to blueberry crops in Alabama, Georgia, and North Carolina. According to local agricultural experts, freeze-damaged blueberries require producers to act quickly to spray recommended fungicides to help prevent infection, prune to remove dead and damaged tissue to promote new, healthy growth, and take other recommended steps depending on crop type, variety, and frost protection.

## **Action**

Producers with insured blueberries impacted by the freeze should immediately contact their crop insurance agent to report a notice of loss. Approved Insurance Providers (AIPs) should begin appraising the impacted crop as soon as possible and release the acreage, as appropriate, so producers can follow recommended good management practices to prevent disease and mitigate reduced production for future years.

The Blueberry Crop Provisions (CP) define damaged blueberries as berries ready to harvest that do not meet U.S. No. 1 grade standard due to an insurable cause of loss. In accordance with Section 10(d), if the insured acreage has harvested or unharvested damaged blueberries and the percent of damaged blueberries exceeds what is shown in the Special Provisions for that type, production to count for the damaged unit, or portion of a unit, will be zero if no blueberries are harvested and sold from such acreage. Refer to the 2022 Loss Adjustment Manual, Paragraph 831 for information concerning immature fruit production and the requirements for final inspection procedures to finalize a claim.

Any acreage impacted by the freeze that the AIP determines will not produce harvestable fruit may be released with zero appraised production to count. AIPs are encouraged to work with the grower and local agricultural experts to determine whether the insured acreage will produce any harvestable blueberries for the crop year. In accordance with Section 9 of the Blueberry CP, insured producers must not sell or dispose of the damaged crop until AIPs have given written consent to do so.

**DISPOSAL DATE:**

December 31, 2022