



News Release

ARKANSAS

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USDA Ready to Help Arkansas Farmers and Ranchers Recover from Recent Flooding, Tornadoes

LITTLE ROCK, AR, June 7, 2019 – Recent extreme weather conditions have impacted farmers and ranchers in Arkansas. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has disaster assistance programs available to help agricultural producers recover after natural disasters, including floods and tornadoes.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Risk Management Agency (RMA) offer programs that help producers recover losses, rehabilitating farms and ranches, and managing risk.

Recovering Losses

FSA offers many programs to help producers recover from losses, including the [Livestock Indemnity Program](#), the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program](#), [Emergency Forest Restoration Program](#) and the [Tree Assistance Program](#). Producers located in counties receiving a primary or contiguous disaster designation are eligible for low-interest [emergency loans](#) to help them recover from production and physical losses.

“FSA has a variety of disaster assistance programs to support farmers and ranchers through times of adversity,” said David Curtis, State Executive Director for the FSA in Arkansas. “Once you are able to evaluate your losses, it is important to contact your local FSA office to report all damages and losses and learn more about how we can assist.”

Rehabilitating Farms and Ranches

NRCS provides technical and financial assistance through the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#) and other conservation programs to help producers recover and build resilience to better weather future disasters. EQIP provides agricultural producers with financial resources and one-on-one help to plan and implement improvements on the land. While not established specifically for disaster response, subject to availability of funds, the program can assist with immediate recovery needs, reapply failed practices due to disasters, and provide long-term support to help conserve natural resources.

“NRCS can be a very valuable partner to help landowners with their recovery effort,” said State Conservationist Mike Sullivan, State Conservationist for the NRCS in Arkansas. “Our staff will work one-on-one with landowners to make assessments of the damages and develop approaches that focus on effective recovery of the land.”

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USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Meanwhile, the FSA [Emergency Conservation Program](#) provides funding and technical assistance for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate farmland and conservation practices damaged by natural disasters.

Managing Risk

Producers with coverage through federal crop insurance should contact their agent for issues regarding filing claims. Those who purchased crop insurance will be paid for covered losses.

“Producers should report crop damage within 72 hours of damage discovery and follow up in writing within 15 days,” RMA Regional Director Roddrick Bell said. “The Approved Insurance Providers, loss adjusters and agents are experienced and well-trained in handling these types of events.”

Compensation also is available to producers who purchased coverage through FSA’s [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](#), which protects non-insurable crops against natural disasters that result in lower yields, crop losses or prevented planting. Eligible producers must have purchased NAP coverage for 2019 crops.

Preventing Future Losses

[Emergency Watershed Protection \(EWP\) Program’s floodplain easement component](#) allows USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to acquire permanent easements on private land, or certain land owned by units of state and local governments, that have been damaged by flooding at least once in the last 12 months or twice in the past 10 years. Once the easements have been established, NRCS will fund conservation work necessary to restore the land to its natural state.

Restoring floodplains to a natural state ensures they function properly – conserving and improving fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, flood water retention, ground water recharge, and open space; reducing long-term federal disaster assistance; and safeguarding lives and property from floods, drought, and erosion. Landowners retain several rights to the property.

Supporting Communities

In addition to helping producers, USDA also offers local governments and other entities with rebuilding infrastructure and removing debris. The NRCS [Emergency Watershed Protection \(EWP\)](#) program provides assistance to local government sponsors with the cost of addressing watershed impairments or hazards like debris removal and streambank stabilization. NRCS works in partnership with other federal agencies and may only work within the EWP authorities. Levee repair on large rivers such as the Arkansas River are outside of the scope of EWP. Interested entities should contact their [local NRCS conservationist](#).

More Information

USDA offers a [disaster assistance discovery tool](#) that walks producers through five questions to help them identify personalized results of what USDA disaster assistance programs meet their needs. For more information on disaster assistance programs, contact your [local USDA service center](#), farmers.gov/recover or the flood assistance section on the Arkansas NRCS web site at www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov for links to FSA, NRCS and RMA disaster programs.

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