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## USDA to Assist Producers for Qualifying Livestock, Honeybee and Farm-Raised Fish Program Losses

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**WASHINGTON, April 9, 2018** – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will issue \$34 million to help agricultural producers recover from 2017 natural disasters through the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-raised Fish Program](#) (ELAP), which covers losses not covered by certain other USDA disaster assistance programs. These payments are being made available today, and they are part of a broader USDA effort to help producers recover from hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, wildfires and drought. A large portion of this assistance will be made available in [federally designated disaster areas](#).

“From Florida, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, through the South, the Southwest, California and the Great Plains, American agriculture was devastated by natural disasters in 2017,” said Bill Northey, Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation. “The Trump Administration is moving quickly to distribute financial assistance to help producers recover and rebuild. It is important to get this help to producers in time for the spring planting season.”

ELAP aims to help eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish for losses due to disease, certain adverse weather events or loss conditions, including blizzards and wildfires, as determined by the Secretary. ELAP assistance is provided for losses not covered by other disaster assistance programs such as the [Livestock Forage Disaster Program \(LFP\)](#) and the [Livestock Indemnity Program \(LIP\)](#).

The increased amount of assistance through ELAP was made possible by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, signed earlier this year. The Act amended the 2014 Farm Bill to enable USDA’s [Farm Service Agency](#) (FSA) to provide assistance to producers without an annual funding cap and immediately for 2017. It also enables FSA to pay ELAP applications as they are filed for 2018 and subsequent program years.

**Other USDA Disaster Assistance Programs**

The Act removed program year payment limitations and increased the acreage cap for the [Tree Assistance Program](#) (TAP), a nationwide program that provides owners of orchards, vineyards and nurseries with cost share assistance to replant eligible trees, bushes, and vines following a natural disaster. For example, the program will help owners of citrus groves in Florida, avocado trees in California, coffee plantations in Puerto Rico and vineyards reduce the cost of replanting, and speed recovery from the loss of fruit and nut trees, bushes, and vines.

Prior to the Act, there was a combined program year payment limitation of \$125,000 for ELAP, LIP and LFP per person or legal entity. The Tree Assistance Program (TAP) had its own \$125,000 payment limitation. The Act removed the program year per person and legal entity payment limitation for LIP and TAP. As a result of the Act, a \$125,000 per person and legal entity single payment limitation applies to the total amount of program year payments received under both ELAP and the [Livestock Forage Disaster Program](#) (LFP) and program payments under LIP and TAP no longer have payment limits.

Under the updated program, as amended by the Act, growers are eligible to be partly reimbursed for losses on up to 1,000 acres per program year, double the previous acreage limit of 500 acres.

In total, it is estimated that the Act will enable USDA to provide more than \$3 billion in disaster assistance, including the \$2.36 billion announced last week to be made available through FSA's new [2017 Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program](#). This includes \$400 million made available for the [Emergency Conservation Program](#), which helps farmers and ranchers repair damage to farmlands caused by natural disasters. As signups across the country are completed, additional applications will be funded.

According to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the United States was impacted by 16 separate billion-dollar disaster events in 2017 including: three tropical cyclones, eight severe storms, two inland floods, a crop freeze, drought and wildfire. More than 25 million people – almost eight percent of the population – were affected by major disasters. From severe flooding in Puerto Rico and Texas to mudslides and wildfires in California, major natural disasters caused catastrophic damages, with an economic impact totaling more than \$300 billion.

### **For Assistance**

Producers with operations impacted by natural disasters and diseases in 2018 are encouraged to contact their [local USDA service center](#) to apply for assistance through ELAP, TAP, LIP and LFP. Producers with 2017 ELAP claims need to take no action as FSA will begin paying those claims today.

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