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## USDA Offers Disaster Assistance to Farmers and Livestock Producers in California Impacted by Recent Winter Storms

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides technical and financial assistance to help California farmers and livestock producers recover from damages brought on by winter storms Uri and Viola. Agricultural producers are encouraged to contact their local USDA Service Center to learn about the programs available to help them recover from crop, land, infrastructure, and livestock losses.

### **Disaster Assistance**

USDA encourages farmers and ranchers to contact the FSA county office at the local [USDA Service Center](#) to apply for eligible programs and to learn which documents, such as farm records, herd inventory, receipts and pictures of damages or losses should be provided to help expedite assistance.

Producers who experience livestock deaths due to the winter storms may be eligible for the [Livestock Indemnity Program](#). Meanwhile, the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program](#) provides eligible producers with compensation for feed and grazing losses. For LIP and ELAP, producers will need to file a notice of loss for livestock and grazing or feed losses within 30 days and honeybee losses within 15 days.

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 winter storms. 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 loans, including operating and emergency 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 damage discovery 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**

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

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) also offers programs to help in the recovery process. The [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP) can help producers plan and implement conservation practices on farms, ranches and working forests impacted by natural disasters.

"NRCS can be a very valuable partner to help private landowners with their recovery efforts," said Carlos Suarez, NRCS state conservationist in California. "Our staff will work one-on-one with private landowners and those who lease land, to make assessments of the damages and develop approaches that focus on effective recovery of that land."

## **Assistance for Communities**

Additional NRCS programs include the [Emergency Watershed Protection](#) (EWP) program, which provides assistance to local government sponsors with the cost of protecting homes and property from watershed impairments or hazards associated with a natural disaster. Work such as debris removal, erosion control, and streambank stabilization is eligible. 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 is possible. For more information, please contact Greg Norris, State Conservation Engineer, at [Greg.Norris@usda.gov](mailto:Greg.Norris@usda.gov).

## **More Information**

On farmers.gov, the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster-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](#).

All USDA Service Centers are open for business, including those that restrict in-person visits or require appointments. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with NRCS, FSA, or any other Service Center agency should call ahead and schedule an appointment. Service Centers that are open for appointments will pre-screen visitors based on health concerns or recent travel, and visitors must adhere to social distancing guidelines. Visitors are also required to wear a face covering during their appointment. Our program delivery staff will continue to work with our producers by phone, email, and using online tools. More information can be found at [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus).

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