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

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HARRISBURG, PA, Feb. 26, 2021 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides technical and financial assistance to help Pennsylvania 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.

“These recent winter storms have taken their toll on farmers and ranchers in Pennsylvania,” said Dan Smeal, acting state executive director for USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Pennsylvania. “We stand with our producers who have worked tirelessly in these severe conditions to keep livestock fed and to protect crops from Mother Nature’s wrath. We know these storms have left damage in their wake, and I’m glad that USDA offers as strong portfolio of disaster assistance programs available to help.”

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.

“Crop insurance and other USDA risk management options are there to help producers manage risk because we never know what nature has in store for the future,” said Alex Sereno, Director, RMA Raleigh Regional Office that covers Pennsylvania. “The Approved Insurance Providers, loss adjusters and agents are experienced and well trained in handling these types of events.”

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.

“USDA can be a very valuable partner to help landowners with their recovery efforts,” said Denise Coleman, NRCS state conservationist in Pennsylvania. “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.”

Assistance for Communities

Additional Natural Resources Conservation Service (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 debris removal and streambank stabilization. Maintenance and repair of public and private roads and bridges are not eligible. Eligible sites must have a home (permanent residence) or business located within 50' of a stream and have experienced severe streambank damage. Examples include several feet or more of bank loss, exposed foundations, or the total failure of existing streambank structures. Damage to homes and businesses caused by high flood water is not eligible for assistance. Upon receiving requests from landowners, sponsors then 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. NRCS at the local level will assist in eligibility determination. For more information, please contact Peter J. Vanderstappen, PE, State Conservation Engineer at peter.vanderstappen@usda.gov or call 717-956-8000.

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.

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