

USDA Highlights Disaster Assistance Available to Florida Producers Impacted by Hurricane Ian

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Polk County, Florida, March 10, 2023 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack yesterday visited a citrus grove in Polk County, Florida to survey the impact of Hurricane Ian and meet with producers impacted by the storm. During the visit, the Secretary highlighted efforts by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to help Florida producers rebuild their operations and increase their bottom lines as they recover from the devastating impact of hurricanes.

“We know how devastating storms can be to the operations of farmers and ranchers,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “USDA is committed to helping producers impacted by severe weather recover and will use all the tools we have to ensure that producers can rebuild and continue to do what they do best by feeding our nation and the world.”

USDA’s Disaster Recovery Efforts in Florida

USDA is working through nearly 2,500 requests for assistance following Hurricane Ian. The Department has held over 16 outreach events specifically for Hurricane Ian disaster assistance programs to assist producers and organizations.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has provided assistance to producers through the Risk Management Agency (RMA) and Natural Resource Conservation Service. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has authorized policy exceptions for three key disaster assistance programs to aid Florida agricultural operations that were significantly impacted by Hurricane Ian in 2022. These programs include the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP), Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) and Tree Assistance Program (TAP).

Crop Insurance

Florida producers received over \$190 million in Federal crop insurance payments as a result of Hurricane Ian with \$134 million arriving within weeks due to the hurricane policy, which automatically

triggers a payment if a county qualifies based on data from the National Hurricane Center at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. RMA manages the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) to provide innovative crop insurance products, like the hurricane policy, to America's farmers and ranchers.

Citrus producers have received almost \$79 million in indemnities for damage from Hurricane Ian. Claims are continuing to be resolved as citrus harvest is still ongoing. Final production numbers are needed to finalize claims.

Emergency Watershed Program

[EWP](#) offers technical and financial assistance to help local communities relieve imminent threats to life and property caused by floods, fires, windstorms and other natural disasters that impair a watershed. Following Hurricane Ian, nearly 300 sites have been identified for EWP assistance and preliminary estimates exceed \$50 million.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program Emergency Assistance

[EQIP](#) provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural and forest producers to improve or protect natural resource conditions while also improving agricultural operations. NRCS can provide payments, through conservation program contracts, for EQIP conservation practices to help agricultural landowners and producers address disaster related resource concerns on their land.

To expedite Hurricane Ian disaster recovery, NRCS offered early start waivers in EQIP emergency declaration counties, to allow commencement of key conservation practices prior to conservation program contract approval. Through EQIP for Hurricane Ian, NRCS has already approved over \$10 million for more than 400 applications.

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program

[ELAP](#) provides assistance to owners of livestock, and producers of honeybees and farm-raised fish for feed and death losses due to an eligible natural disaster event. For ELAP, FSA will still accept late-file acreage certifications for honeybees and aquaculture for 2022 with no fee and no field inspection required.

Aquaculture and honeybee producers will need to provide the local FSA county committee with evidence that the fish, bees or hives existed prior to the qualifying natural disaster event, including proof of feed purchase, purchase of stock, etc.

Livestock Indemnity Program

The notice of loss filing date for [LIP](#) has been extended through March 30, 2023, and the deadline for applications for payment extended through May 1, 2023. LIP provides benefits to livestock owners and contract growers who experience livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by specific adverse weather, disease or animal attacks.

Tree Assistance Program

[TAP](#) provides financial cost-share assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or, where applicable, rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes, and vines lost by natural disasters.

For Florida citrus producers, the deadline to file a Notice of Loss with FSA has been extended from 60 calendar days up to an additional two-years on the timeframe to complete practices for citrus losses. A request for a practice extension must be made in writing (can be submitted via email) before practice completion date.

More Information

On farmers.gov, the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster Assistance-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#) (PDF, 1.4 MB) 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](#).

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