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Farm Service Agency

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

U.S. Department of Agriculture Designates Five Georgia Counties as Primary Natural Disaster Areas Due to Severe Drought Conditions

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Producers in 14 Additional Primary and Contiguous Georgia Counties Eligible for Emergency Relief

ATHENS, Ga., Nov. 15, 2023 – On November 13, 2023, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) designated five Georgia counties as primary natural disaster areas. The Secretarial natural disaster designation allows the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to extend much-needed emergency credit to producers recovering from natural disasters through [emergency loans](#). This announcement expands upon a previous designation that declared four Northwest Georgia counties natural disaster areas due to recent severe drought conditions.

“Severe drought conditions can have a devastating impact on agricultural operations,” said Arthur Tripp, State Executive Director for FSA in Georgia. “In the face of natural disasters, our agency stands committed to providing assistance and support to our agricultural producers. Through these designations, Georgia producers will have access to the emergency credit that is critical to their recovery from severe drought conditions.”

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, the primary counties suffered from a drought intensity value during the growing season of 1) D2 Drought-Severe for more than 8 or more consecutive weeks, 2) D3 Drought-Extreme or, 3) D3 Drought-Exceptional. Producers in an additional nine contiguous Georgia counties are also eligible for disaster relief coverage. Producers in the following eligible counties will have until **July 15, 2024** to apply for FSA emergency assistance.

Primary Counties Eligible

Georgia: Decatur, Early, Miller, Seminole, Union

Contiguous Counties Also Eligible

Georgia: Baker, Calhoun, Clay, Fannin, Grady, Lumpkin, Mitchell, Towns, White

Alabama: Henry, Houston

Florida: Gadsden, Jackson

North Carolina: Cherokee, Clay

FSA emergency loans allow producers to borrow up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses, up to a maximum amount of \$500,000. These loans assist producers in meeting their various recovery needs, including the payment of essential family living expenses, reorganization of a farming operation, or to refinance certain debts. FSA considers each emergency loan application on its own merits, considering the extent of losses, security available, and repayment ability.

For more information about FSA's full suite of disaster recovery options, producers can visit [farmers.gov](https://www.farmers.gov), where the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster Assistance-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#), and [Loan Assistance Tool](#) can help you determine program or loan options. Producers can also contact their local [USDA Service Center](#) to file a Notice of Loss and learn more about programs fitting their operational needs.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy, and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit [usda.gov](https://www.usda.gov).

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