



United States Department of
Agriculture
Farm Service Agency

New York State FSA
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Farmers who sustained damage to their cropland should report the damage along with the estimated dollar amount to their local FSA office. The staff will conduct a field visit to determine eligibility.

In anticipation of heavy ECP workload, Barber emphasized producers should provide their local office pictures of the damage to support their claim.

Signup periods will be announced if ECP funding is provided by Congress.

Barber stated New York State FSA will work with the Governor's office to request a Secretarial Disaster Declaration so Emergency Loan Program funds will be available to provide credit to farmers who sustained production and physical losses related to the storm. If approved, producers can borrow up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses, to a maximum amount of \$500,000.

Emergency loan funds must be fully collateralized and may be used to restore or replace essential property, purchase feed, pay production costs or essential family living expenses and refinance certain debts.

FSA administers several other important programs that help producers recover from disaster damage and livestock deaths. Other key programs available to address impacts from Hurricane Irene are the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), the Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP), the Tree Assistance Program (TAP) and the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program.

Barber encouraged all producers who suffered losses related to Hurricane Irene to contact their local FSA office and speak with the staff about what type of assistance may be available.

To find the nearest FSA office visit: www.fsa.usda.gov

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USDA Highlights Assistance to Residents Affected by Hurricane Irene

WASHINGTON, Aug. 31, 2011 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today said USDA is ready to deploy personnel and resources to assist the efforts by federal, state and local authorities in response to Hurricane Irene. Yesterday, the Secretary joined Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano for a tour of hurricane-impacted areas in North Carolina and Virginia.

"Our thoughts and prayers go out to all who have suffered losses caused by this massive storm," said Vilsack. "USDA is ready to provide food, emergency assistance and other resources to the affected areas. We continue to closely coordinate with many partners to meet the immediate and plan for the long-term needs of those affected by Hurricane Irene."

USDA encourages farmers, ranchers, producers, landowners and rural communities to contact their local USDA Farm Service Agency Service Center to report damages to crops or livestock loss; their local Rural Development office for housing, business or community assistance information and/or their local Natural Resources Conservation Service office for help with debris removal.

Specifically, USDA is offering the following assistance in response to the hurricane:

Food Assistance - Inventories of USDA Foods have been identified within impacted States for use as part of disaster mass feeding. USDA is working closely with State partners to help address the food needs of disaster survivors.

On Aug. 26, USDA approved a request from Puerto Rico to operate a disaster household distribution program for almost 57,000 households in seven regions where families are cut off from other access to food and shelter or retail food markets due to power outages, road closures, flooding or landslides. Approximately 1 million pounds of nonperishable USDA Foods valued at nearly \$1.2 million was approved to be provided in disaster food boxes distributed to families through community centers from Aug. 26 – Sept. 2. So far the Puerto Rico Department of the Family distributed USDA foods to 16,615 families in 13 municipalities. Puerto Rico has just implemented a Disaster Nutrition Assistance Program in which they will provide a third of the August 2011 benefits in replacements for certain localities.

Additionally, as damage assessments are completed, USDA is prepared to offer the following assistance as part of the overall federal response efforts:

Housing Assistance – USDA'S Rural Development is encouraging residents affected by the disaster to immediately apply for funding assistance under Rural single family housing loan and grant programs. Funds are available for housing repair, rehabilitation and home purchases. For home financing, USDA will assist with expediting lender approval and approval for access to the Guaranteed Underwriting Services; and offer streamlined loan processing. Individuals needing payment assistance on their existing USDA Rural Development Single and Multi-family loans are encouraged to contact the Centralized Servicing Center at (800) 414-1226.

Community Assistance - Rural communities in Puerto Rico's impacted areas may be eligible for funding through Rural Community Facilities programs. Facilities eligible for

funding include schools, libraries, childcare centers, hospitals, medical clinics, assisted living facilities, fire and rescue stations, police stations, community centers, public buildings and transportation. These communities can contact USDA Rural Development offices to determine which program is applicable to assist them.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service state operations are prepared to work with local communities to determine Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) requests in the disaster areas. EWP helps protect lives and property threatened by natural disasters such as floods, hurricanes, tornadoes and wildfires. The program provides technical and financial assistance to preserve life and property threatened by excessive erosion and flooding. Owners, managers, and users of public, private or tribal lands are eligible for EWP assistance if their watershed area has been damaged by a natural disaster. NRCS can fund immediate actions necessary to address threats to life or property (exigencies). Exigency funds are provided and approved quickly to lessen the threat to lives and property that exists as a result of storms or flooding. For example, exigency funding can be used to remove stream blockages and debris. Debris can include twisted trees and other woody vegetation as well as home construction materials. The removal of stream debris is important because obstructions increase the risk of flooding thus the further risk to life and property. Other conditions where EWP exigency funds can be used include embankment stabilization and erosion control around culverts or bridges of open roads. If these areas are not protected and stabilized after a storm or flooding there is increased threat to life and property.

Business Assistance - Rural businesses in Presidentially declared disaster may be eligible for assistance through the Rural Business Service. Applicants or existing borrowers should contact their State USDA Rural Development office to determine which program is applicable to assist them.

Utility Assistance -- Should any existing water, telecommunications or electric program borrowers need to seek assistance from Rural Development, contact your local Rural Development representatives or USDA's National Rural Development office.

Farmer and Rancher Assistance - USDA encourages farmers who have crop and or physical damage, to contact their local Farm Service Agency Service Center as soon as possible.

The affected State and County Emergency Boards, chaired by the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), are assisting with the response efforts and quickly assessing agricultural needs and determining the storms impact on crops. Emergency loans are available to agricultural producers through the Farm Service Agency Emergency (EM) Loan Program which provides low-interest EM loans for crop and livestock production and physical losses. The loans are available in counties declared under a Presidential (PEMA) declaration or Secretarial disaster designation. Assistance also might be available through the Farm Service Agency Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) funds, subject to the availability of funds. ECP signup will be held where authorized by FSA State Committees. ECP applications will be processed subject to available funding. And farmers and ranchers may qualify for assistance for any crop or livestock losses if they meet certain eligibility requirements.

Assistance is available through the following FSA assistance programs:

- Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program for crop revenue losses from quantity or quality deficiencies only in those counties and contiguous counties declared disaster areas by the Agriculture Secretary or in cases where a farm's overall production loss exceeds 50 percent;
- Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program for producers and ranchers who previously submitted an application for coverage for noninsured crop losses..
- Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm Raised Fish for emergency relief to producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish who suffered losses from disaster such as adverse weather or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires not adequately covered by any other disaster program;

- Livestock Indemnity Program for assistance to livestock producers for livestock deaths from disaster events, in excess of normal mortality;
- The Tree Assistance Program for partial reimbursement to orchardists and nursery tree growers for replanting, salvage, pruning, debris removal and land preparation if losses due to natural disasters exceed 15 percent and
- Producers who have existing direct loans with FSA in counties declared or contiguous to counties declared as disasters are eligible to be considered for Debt Set Aside (DSA). Under the DSA program, up to one full years payment can be moved to the end of the loan.

Assistance also is available for crop producers who previously purchased crop insurance through programs offered by the USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA). RMA is prepared to authorize emergency loss procedures that streamline, on a crop specific basis, certain loss determinations and payments.

Additionally, USDA staff is coordinating closely with agricultural industry representatives to address specific needs as they arise.

In advance of the storm, the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) helped consumers prepare for Hurricane Irene by providing critical food safety information. Food safety public service announcements were sent to media outlets along the entire Eastern seaboard to give direction about how to prevent food borne illness once families return to their homes. Additionally, FSIS issued consumer alerts in English and Spanish to media outlets and on the Web to provide consumers with food safety steps to take before and after a power outage as well as flooding.

Consumers with food safety questions can "Ask Karen," the FSIS virtual representative available 24 hours a day at AskKaren.gov. The toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854) is available in English and Spanish and can be reached from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Eastern Time) Monday through Friday. Recorded food safety messages are available 24 hours a day.

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service provided livestock and pet safety tips.

Additional information about these assistance programs, safety tips and updates about USDA's hurricane relief efforts are posted on the Web at www.usda.gov/disaster. Click on the hurricane relief link. Rural Development state office contact information is available at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/Home.html>.

And information about the U.S. Government's hurricane response efforts is available at www.ready.gov.

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