



Natural Resources Conservation Service

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NEWS RELEASE

USDA offers disaster assistance to farmers in Tennessee impacted by recent storms and tornadoes

NASHVILLE, Tennessee, May 5, 2023 – Agricultural operations in Tennessee have been significantly impacted by recent tornadoes and severe storms that caused widespread and extensive destruction across the state. The USDA has technical and financial assistance available to help farmers and livestock producers recover in the wake of these disasters. Impacted producers should contact their local USDA service center to report losses and learn more about programs that may be available to assist in their recovery from crop, land, infrastructure and livestock losses and damages.

“Production agriculture is vital to the economic well-being of communities across Tennessee, and USDA stands ready to help farmers, ranchers, and foresters as they work to recover from the recent severe weather event,” said Robert Bonnie, Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation. “USDA employees are working diligently to deliver Farm Production and Conservation’s extensive portfolio of disaster assistance programs and services to all impacted agricultural producers.”

Risk Management

Producers who have risk protection through [Federal Crop Insurance](#) or Farm Service Agency’s (FSA) [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](#) (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.

“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 Roddrick Bell, director of the Risk Management Agency’s Jackson (Tennessee) Regional Office. “The approved insurance providers, loss adjusters and agents are experienced and well trained in handling these types of events.”

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. Producers who have not applied for NAP coverage may still be covered. FSA has [updated NAP](#) to remove barriers and establish procedures through which an underserved producer with a Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification (CCC-860) on file prior to the applicable NAP application closing date will automatically receive basic coverage for any NAP-eligible crops. Like all NAP-covered producers, underserved producers will still need to file a notice of loss and apply for program benefits.

USDA Disaster Assistance

Producers who experience livestock deaths may be eligible for the [Livestock Indemnity Program](#). To participate in this program, producers will have to provide verifiable documentation of death losses resulting from an eligible adverse weather event and must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is apparent.

Meanwhile, the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program](#) provides eligible producers with compensation for feed and grazing losses. To participate in this program, producers will need to file a notice of loss 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](#) to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes or vines lost. This complements NAP or crop insurance coverage, which covers the crop but not the plants or trees in all cases. To participate in this program, applications must be filed within 90 days.

“It’s important to stay informed about the various programs that may be available to your operation to recover from these severe weather events and equally important that you contact your local FSA office to timely report all crop, livestock, and farm infrastructure damages and losses,” said John Litz, FSA state executive director in Tennessee. “To expedite FSA disaster assistance, you will likely need to provide documents, such as farm records, herd inventory, receipts and pictures of damages or losses.”

Agricultural producers are reminded to contact their local FSA office to timely report all crop, livestock and farm infrastructure damages and losses. To expedite FSA disaster assistance, producers will likely need to provide documents, such as farm records, herd inventory, receipts and pictures of damages or losses.

FSA also offers a variety of direct and guaranteed [farm loans](#), including operating and emergency farm 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. Additionally, FSA has a variety of loan servicing options available for borrowers who are unable to make scheduled payments on their farm loan programs debt to the Agency because of reasons beyond their control, including [the Disaster Set-Aside Program](#).

The [Farm Storage Facility Loan Program](#) provides low-interest financing so producers can build or upgrade facilities to store commodities. Loan terms vary from three to 12 years. Producers who incurred damage to or loss of their equipment or infrastructure funded by this program should contact their insurance agent and their local USDA Service Center. Producers in need of on-farm storage should also contact USDA.

Helping People Help the Land

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Conservation

FSA's [Emergency Conservation Program](#) and [Emergency Forest Restoration Program](#) can assist landowners and forest stewards with financial and technical assistance to restore fencing, damaged farmland or forests. The Emergency Conservation Program can also cover costs associated with debris removal from cropland. Producers who experienced damage from the recent storms can complete apply for these programs at their local FSA office.

NRCS is always available to provide technical assistance in the recovery process by assisting producers to plan and implement conservation practices on farms, ranches and working forests impacted by natural disasters. The [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) can help producers plan and implement conservation practices on land impacted by natural disasters.

Additional Information and Assistance

Additional NRCS programs include the [Emergency Watershed Protection](#) program, which assists local government sponsors with the cost of addressing watershed impairments or hazards such as debris removal and streambank stabilization.

Eligible sponsors include cities, counties, towns or any federally recognized Native American tribe or tribal organization. Sponsors must submit a formal request (by 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 become available. For more information, producers should contact their [local NRCS office](#).

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

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 throughout 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](#).