

April 2018



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

# NEWSLETTER

**GovDelivery**

Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)

- [From the Desk of the SED...](#)
- [Important Crop Reporting Requirement](#)
- [USDA Announces Streamlined Guaranteed Loans and Additional Lender Category for Small-Scale Operators](#)
- [USDA to Immediately Assist Producers for Qualifying Livestock, Honeybee and Farm-raised Fish Program Losses](#)
- [Payment Limitations by Program](#)
- [Grafting Workshop, an NJ NOFA Event](#)
- [Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation](#)
- [Livestock Inventory Records](#)

---

## New Jersey State FSA Newsletter

---

### New Jersey Farm Service Agency

300 Clocktower Drive  
Suite 202  
Hamilton Square, NJ  
08690

**Phone:**  
609-587-0104

[www.fsa.usda.gov/nj](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nj)

**State Committee:**

Linda A. DuBois, Chair  
Kurt W. Alstede  
Samuel G. Conard

**State Executive Director:**  
Barry Calogero

### From the Desk of the SED...

Spring has just about sprung and not a moment too soon, I think it's safe to say the cold, snowy days of winter are behind us and I'm sure you are all anxious to get in the fields and start doing what you do best... FARM.

Please take the opportunity, as early as you can, to stop by your local FSA County office to find out if anything new has been added to the FSA's consortium of farmer benefits, loans and programs and while there update the office on any changes in your business plans for this season. It's also a great time to just say hello.



Now that the weather has broken, I look forward to traveling throughout the state to meet the men and women who are such an important asset to this great State of New Jersey.

**Farm Loan Chief:**  
Kevin P. Murphy

Thank you for your hard work, perseverance, and dedication to ensure NJ farming continues to prosper and grow. We look forward to serving you.

Please contact your [local FSA Office](#) for questions specific to your operation or county

Sincerely,  
Barry Calogero  
NJ FSA State Executive Director

**Important Dates:**

**May 1:** NAP Coverage  
Deadline for 2019 nursery

---

## Important Crop Reporting Requirement

For NAP-covered crops, acreage must be reported by the earlier of; the normal acreage reporting deadline for the crop, or 15 days prior to onset of harvest.

---

## USDA Announces Streamlined Guaranteed Loans and Additional Lender Category for Small-Scale Operators

*Options Help More Beginning, Small and Urban Producers Gain Access to Credit*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the availability of a streamlined version of USDA guaranteed loans, which are tailored for smaller scale farms and urban producers. The program, called EZ Guarantee Loans, uses a simplified application process to help beginning, small, underserved and family farmers and ranchers apply for loans of up to \$100,000 from USDA-approved lenders to purchase farmland or finance agricultural operations.

A new category of lenders will join traditional lenders, such as banks and credit unions, in offering USDA EZ Guarantee Loans. Microlenders, which include Community Development Financial Institutions and Rural Rehabilitation Corporations, will be able to offer their customers up to \$50,000 of EZ Guaranteed Loans, helping to reach urban areas and underserved producers. Banks, credit unions and other traditional USDA-approved lenders, can offer customers up to \$100,000 to help with agricultural operation costs.

EZ Guarantee Loans offer low interest rates and terms up to seven years for financing operating expenses and 40 years for financing the purchase of farm real estate. USDA-approved lenders can issue these loans with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) guaranteeing the loan up to 95 percent.

More information about the available types of FSA farm loans can be found at [www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans) or by contacting your local FSA office.

---

## USDA to Immediately Assist Producers for Qualifying Livestock, Honeybee and Farm-raised Fish Program Losses

*\$34 Million in Payments for 2017 Losses Part of Broad Suite of Programs Aiding Ag Operations*

USDA will issue \$34 million to help agricultural producers recover from 2017 natural disasters through the [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-raised Fish Program](#) (ELAP), which covers losses not covered by certain other USDA disaster assistance programs. These payments are being made available today, and they are part of a broader USDA effort to help producers recover from hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, wildfires and drought. A large portion of this assistance will be made available in [federally designated disaster areas](#).

ELAP aims to help eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish for losses due to disease, certain adverse weather events or loss conditions, including blizzards and wildfires, as determined by the Secretary. ELAP assistance is provided for losses not covered by other disaster assistance programs such as the [Livestock Forage Disaster Program \(LFP\)](#) and the [Livestock Indemnity Program \(LIP\)](#).

The increased amount of assistance through ELAP was made possible by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, signed earlier this year. The Act amended the 2014 Farm Bill to enable USDA's [Farm Service Agency \(FSA\)](#) to provide assistance to producers without an annual funding cap and immediately for 2017. It also enables FSA to pay ELAP applications as they are filed for 2018 and subsequent program years.

### **Other USDA Disaster Assistance Programs**

The Act removed program year payment limitations and increased the acreage cap for the [Tree Assistance Program \(TAP\)](#), a nationwide program that provides owners of orchards, vineyards and nurseries with cost share assistance to replant eligible trees, bushes, and vines following a natural disaster. For example, the program will help owners of citrus groves in Florida, avocado trees in California, coffee plantations in Puerto Rico and vineyards reduce the cost of replanting, and speed recovery from the loss of fruit and nut trees, bushes, and vines.

Prior to the Act, there was a combined program year payment limitation of \$125,000 for ELAP, LIP and LFP per person or legal entity. The Tree Assistance Program (TAP) had its own \$125,000 payment limitation. The Act removed the program year per person and legal entity payment limitation for LIP and TAP. As a result of the Act, a \$125,000 per person and legal entity single payment limitation applies to the total amount of program year payments received under both ELAP and the [Livestock Forage Disaster Program \(LFP\)](#) and program payments under LIP and TAP no longer have payment limits.

Under the updated program, as amended by the Act, growers are eligible to be partly reimbursed for losses on up to 1,000 acres per program year, double the previous acreage limit of 500 acres.

In total, it is estimated that the Act will enable USDA to provide more than \$3 billion in disaster assistance, including the \$2.36 billion announced last week to be made available through FSA's new 2017 Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program. This includes \$400 million made available for the [Emergency Conservation Program](#), which helps farmers and ranchers repair damage to farmlands caused by natural disasters. As signups across the country are completed, additional applications will be funded.

According to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the United States was impacted by 16 separate billion-dollar disaster events in 2017 including: three tropical cyclones, eight severe storms, two inland floods, a crop freeze, drought and wildfire. More than 25 million people – almost eight percent of the population – were affected by major disasters. From severe flooding in Puerto Rico and Texas to mudslides and wildfires in California, major natural disasters caused catastrophic damages, with an economic impact totaling more than \$300 billion.

### **For Assistance**

Producers with operations impacted by natural disasters and diseases in 2018 are encouraged to contact their [local USDA service center](#) to apply for assistance through ELAP, TAP, LIP and LFP. Producers with 2017 ELAP claims need to take no action as FSA will begin paying those claims today.

---

## **Payment Limitations by Program**

The 2014 Farm Bill established a maximum dollar amount for each program that can be received annually, directly or indirectly, by each person or legal entity. Payment limitations vary by program for 2014 through 2018.

Below is an overview of payment limitations by program.

### **Commodity and Price Support Programs**

The annual limitation for the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs) and Market Loan Gains is \$125,000 total.

### **Conservation Programs**

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) annual rental payment and incentive payment is limited to \$50,000. CRP contracts approved before Oct. 1, 2008, may exceed the limitation, subject to payment limitation rules in effect on the date of contract approval.

The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) has an annual limit of \$200,000 per disaster event. The Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) has an annual limit of \$500,000 per disaster event.

### **Disaster Assistance Programs**

The annual limitation of \$125,000 applies to the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP), Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) and Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP). The total payments received under ELAP, LFP and LIP may not exceed \$125,000. A separate limitation of \$125,000 applies to Tree Assistance Program (TAP) payments. There is also a separate \$125,000 payment limit for the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP).

Payment limitations also apply to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs. Contact your local NRCS office more information.

For more information on FSA payment limitations by program, visit [https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdfiles/FactSheets/2015/payment\\_eligibility\\_payment\\_limitations.pdf](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdfiles/FactSheets/2015/payment_eligibility_payment_limitations.pdf).

---

## **Grafting Workshop, an NJ NOFA Event**

**April 20, 4-6 pm at Firefly Farm, 181 Crusher RD Hopewell, NJ 08525**

Please join NOFA-NJ at the beautiful Firefly Farm in Hopewell, NJ for a grafting workshop with Tom Molnar, PhD. Dr. Molnar is an Associate Professor in the Plant Biology Department of the Rutgers University School of Environmental and Biological Sciences. Our host, Tessa Desmond, is a farmer and a scholar. She is a Lecturer and Associate Research Scholar in American Studies at Princeton University, where she teaches courses on food politics, agrarian thought, racial justice and multiethnic literature. During this workshop, we will be learning the basics of different grafting methods and diving deeper with some hands-on work.

Participants will graft established plum trees and work with apple rootstocks and scions. Each participant will take home a grafted apple rootstock for planting. Materials will be supplied. The workshop will be followed by an optional potluck dinner at Firefly Farm. Those wanting to stay for the potluck are asked to bring a side dish, salad, or dessert.

[Registration \\$20](#)

For information contact NJ NOFA at 908-371-1111 or [nofainfo@nofanj.org](mailto:nofainfo@nofanj.org)

---

## Environmental Review Required Before Project Implementation

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires Federal agencies to consider all potential environmental impacts for federally-funded projects before the project is approved.

For all Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs, an environmental review must be completed before actions are approved, such as site preparation or ground disturbance. These programs include, **but are not limited to**, the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program and farm loans. If project implementation begins before FSA has completed an environmental review, this will result in a denial of the request. There are exceptions regarding the Stafford Act and emergencies. It is important to wait until you receive written approval of your project proposal before starting any actions, including, but not limited to, vegetation clearing, site preparation or ground disturbance.

Remember to contact your local FSA office early in your planning process to determine what level of environmental review is required for your program application so that it can be completed timely.

Applications cannot be approved contingent upon the completion of an environmental review. FSA must have copies of all permits and plans before an application can be approved.

---

## Livestock Inventory Records

Producers are reminded to keep updated livestock inventory records. These records are necessary in the event of a natural disaster.

When disasters strike, the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) can assist producers who suffered excessive livestock death losses and grazing or feed losses due to eligible natural disasters.

To participate in livestock disaster assistance programs, producers will be required 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. For grazing or feed losses, producers must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent and should maintain documentation and receipts.

Producers should record all pertinent information regarding livestock inventory records including:

- Documentation of the number, kind, type, and weight range of livestock
- Beginning inventory supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts;

For more information on documentation requirements, [contact your local FSA office](#).

---

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).