

Release No. 0111.17

Contact:

Brenda Carlson, 979-680-5213

Isabel Benemelis, 202-720-7809

Farmers and Ranchers Affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma Granted Extra Time, Procedures, to Document and Claim Disaster Losses

WASHINGTON, Sept. 13, 2017 – Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue today announced special procedures to assist producers who lost crops or livestock or had other damage to their farms or ranches as a result of hurricanes Harvey and Irma. Also, because of the severe and widespread damage caused by the hurricanes, USDA will provide additional flexibility to assist farm loan borrowers. “The impact is shocking and will be felt for many months,” said Secretary Perdue. “In addition to efforts being made on the ground to assist producers, we have taken a hard look at our regular reporting requirements and adjusted them so producers can take care of pressing needs first and mostly deal with documentation and claims later. President Trump’s directive is to help people first and deal with paperwork second. And that’s what USDA is doing.”

USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA), is authorizing emergency procedures on a case-by-case basis to assist impacted borrowers, livestock owners, contract growers, and other producers. The measures announced today apply only to counties impacted by a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration-determined tropical storm, typhoon, or hurricane, including Harvey and Irma that have received a primary Presidential Disaster Declaration and those counties contiguous to such designated counties.

Financially stressed FSA farm loan borrowers affected by the hurricanes who have received primary loan servicing applications may be eligible for 60 day extensions. Full details are available at <https://go.usa.gov/xRe8V>.

A more complete listing of all of the special farm program provisions is posted at <https://go.usa.gov/xRe8p>.

Among the actions announced today are lengthened deadlines for certain provisions under the Marketing Assistance Loan (MAL) program, the Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFL), and the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), the Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP), the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP). Emergency grazing may also be authorized under the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) for up to 60 days.

In addition, the deadlines to file a loss for the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP) are extended, and special provisions are provided for “acceptable proof of livestock death and inventory for livestock losses.”

Farmers and ranchers affected by the hurricanes are urged to keep thorough records of all losses, including livestock death losses, as well as expenses for such things as feed purchases and other extraordinary costs because of lost supplies and or increased transportation costs.

Producers with coverage through USDA’s Risk Management Agency (RMA) administered federal crop insurance program should contact their crop insurance agent for issues regarding filing claims. Those who purchased crop insurance will be paid for covered losses. Producers should report crop damage

within 72 hours of damage discovery and follow up in writing within 15 days. The Approved Insurance Providers (AIP), loss adjusters and agents are experienced and well trained in handling these types of events. For more information see <https://www.rma.usda.gov/news/stormdisaster.html>.

As part of its commitment to delivering excellent customer service, RMA is working closely with AIPs that sell and service crop insurance policies to ensure enough loss adjusters will be available to process claims in the affected areas as quickly as possible.

In anticipation of flooding due to Hurricane Harvey, RMA took several proactive steps to ensure the efficient and reliable delivery of the crop insurance program. RMA authorized the use of emergency loss adjustment procedures to streamline certain loss determinations on specific crops and accelerated the adjustment of losses and issuance of indemnity payments to policyholders in all Texas and Louisiana counties impacted by Hurricane Harvey. RMA is reviewing the need for additional measures in response to Hurricane Irma.

USDA encourages all farmers and ranchers to contact their crop insurance agents and their local FSA office, as applicable, to report damages to crops or livestock loss. To find the FSA office nearest you, please visit <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>. Additional resources to help farmers and ranchers deal with flooding and other damage may be found at www.usda.gov/disaster.

Clay Hollis
External Affairs Director
Office of Commissioner Adam H. Putnam
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

(850) 617-7700
(850) 617-7744 fax
Clay.Hollis@FreshFromFlorida.com

The Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0800

www.FreshFromFlorida.com

Please note that Florida has a broad public records law (Chapter 119, Florida Statutes). Most written communications to or from state employees are public records obtainable by the public upon request. Emails sent to me at the email address may be considered public and will only be withheld from disclosure if deemed confidential pursuant to the laws of the State of Florida.