



## **Emergency Conservation Program 2005 Hurricane Assistance**

### **Overview**

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) is providing \$199.8 million in Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) funds to farmers affected by 2005 hurricanes. ECP funds are authorized by the 2006 Emergency Appropriations Act, signed by President Bush on Dec. 30, 2005.

### **Eligibility**

To be eligible, producers must have suffered losses in counties with Presidential or Secretarial-declared hurricane emergencies during calendar year 2005 that have been approved for ECP.

A list of eligible counties, located in Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina and Texas, is available online at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/facts/html/hurrcounties06.htm>.

### **ECP Benefits**

ECP funding will help eligible farmers rehabilitate farmland damaged by the hurricanes, including removing debris and restoring fences and conservation structures. ECP provides cost-share assistance up to 75 percent.

However, for 2005 Hurricanes Katrina and Rita only, ECP program participants may receive

cost-share assistance of up to 100 percent of the cost to implement approved emergency conservation practices, as determined by county FSA committees.

ECP cost-share assistance is limited to a maximum of \$200,000 per person.

Technical assistance may be provided by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service or a state forestry representative.

### **Additional Benefits**

In addition, for the 2005 hurricanes only, the Act expands ECP to include payments to nursery and poultry producers, and private non-industrial forest owners who suffered a 35 percent loss. Nursery and poultry producers may receive up to 90 percent cost-sharing to:

- Remove nursery debris such as nursery structures, shade-houses and above-ground irrigation facilities; and
- Clean up farm structures, such as barns and poultry house debris.

### **Payments for Uninsured Poultry House Losses**

FSA is providing assistance for poultry growers who suffered uninsured losses to poultry houses. The total federal assistance plus

private insurance payment is limited to 90 percent of the replacement value for a similar structure. Subject to that limit, cost-share assistance will be the lesser of 50 percent of the eligible cost of reconstruction/repair or \$50,000 per poultry house. These funds will help producers rebuild their operations. Producers will be required to rebuild in compliance with current building code requirements.

### **Payments to Private Forest Owners**

The Act provides assistance to private nonindustrial forest owners who suffered a loss of, or damage to, at least 35 percent of forest acres on commercial forestland. Forestry cost-share is limited to 75 percent of the cost of reforestation, rehabilitation and related measures, not to exceed \$150 per acre.

To receive assistance, during the 5-year period beginning on the date of the loss, the eligible forest owner must:

- Reforest the eligible damaged forest acres in accordance with an approved forest management plan;
- Use the best management practices included in the forest management plan; and

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- Exercise good stewardship on the forestland while maintaining the land in a forested state.

FSA will assure that duplicate payments are not made to producers for the same practices under different federal programs such as the Emergency Forestry Conservation Reserve Program and the Emergency Watershed Program.

### **Application**

Eligible producers can apply for ECP funds at any FSA office.

### **For More Information**

The ECP assistance is part of a \$4.5 billion USDA package of aid to help agricultural producers and rural communities recover from the 2005 hurricane season. For more information on ECP and other USDA disaster aid programs, visit your local FSA office and FSA's Web site at: <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov/fsa.asp>.

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