



# NEWS RELEASE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE • FARM SERVICE AGENCY

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## USDA FARM SERVICE AGENCY OFFERS ASSISTANCE TO MISSISSIPPI FARMERS AFFECTED BY TORNADO

**(Jackson, MS) April 30, 2010,** — Emergency assistance for eligible and qualifying producers affected by last weekend's tornado is now available through the Farm Service Agency (FSA), according to Michael R. Sullivan, Mississippi FSA State Executive Director.

"The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) provides funding to assist affected farmers and producers in their efforts to remove debris from farmland and restore fences," Sullivan said.

The program is administered by FSA's state and county committees. Locally-elected county committees are authorized to implement ECP for all disasters except drought, which is authorized at the national office of FSA. Eligible producers will receive cost-share assistance of up to 75 percent of the cost of the approved practice. The two approved practices are: debris removal on farmland and restoring fencing.

For a producer's land to be eligible, the disaster must create new conservation problems that, if untreated, would impair or endanger the land and affect its productive capacity. Conservation problems existing prior to the applicable disaster are ineligible for ECP assistance.

According to Sullivan, six FSA county offices have been given the authority to implement the program: Attala, Choctaw, Holmes, Monroe, Oktibbeha and Yazoo. Producers in these counties may visit their local FSA Office to sign up.

FSA offers additional programs to help farmers and ranchers recover from natural disasters. The Emergency Farm Loan Program provides loans to cover losses for designated disasters. The loans are made to qualified farmers who cannot obtain credit from other lenders in the local area. A Presidential or Administrative Declaration on assistance for physical losses will have to be made and issued before applications can be taken. A declaration request has been submitted and more information will be announced at a later date once a designation has been issued.

The Livestock Indemnity Program provides assistance to producers for livestock deaths that result from natural disaster. The program provides benefits to livestock producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by adverse weather. Farmers are encouraged to contact the local office for detailed information.

"USDA is committed to assisting in the recovery from this disaster that has affected so many of our farmers," Sullivan said.

More information on ECP and other disaster assistance programs is available at local FSA offices and online at: <http://www.disaster.fsa.usda.gov>.

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