

WILDFIRE DISASTER ASSISTANCE



As fires continue to rage across California, destroying life and property, our thoughts and prayers go out to those affected.

Various federal government programs exist to provide disaster assistance for those who have been impacted by wildfires. Although your attention is no doubt focused on the situation at hand, it's important to note that several of the disaster assistance programs have initial notification deadlines that must be met in order to be eligible for funding.

Livestock Indemnity Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) to reimburse producers up to 75% of the market value of animals lost due to adverse weather conditions. Adverse weather conditions under LIP include wildfires. All classes of cattle are eligible for reimbursement including cows, bulls and calves. For 2017, a claim for a bull is paid out at \$1,350.34, a cow at \$1,038.73 and non-adult cattle (calves) from \$471.22 per head to \$1,001.12 per head depending on weight.

In order to be eligible to receive payment under LIP, a producer must notify their local county Farm Service Administration (FSA) of their intent to seek a claim within 30 days of the loss. A final claim must be submitted within 90 days of informing the county FSA office of the loss and the final claim must also be made within the same calendar year as the loss. Documentation will be requested by the county FSA office to verify the claim including any photographs that can be made available documenting the loss or the impact of the fire, records to prove ownership, etc.

A fact sheet about the Livestock Indemnity Program can be found here:
https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdfiles/FactSheets/archived-fact-sheets/lip_fact_sheet_march2017.pdf

Non Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

The NAP program is a federal disaster insurance program that enables ranchers who have applied for coverage to receive compensation for a loss of forage due to drought or other natural disasters like wildfire. In order to be eligible to receive payments under NAP, a rancher must have previously enrolled in the program with their county FSA office and paid the service fee.

If you are currently enrolled in NAP and you've experienced forage loss due to fire, you may be eligible for a claim. Producers must report a loss to their local county FSA office within 15 calendar days of the natural disaster occurring by completing a "Notice of Loss & Application for Payment" form. The form is available at your local FSA office.

A fact sheet about the Non Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program can be found here: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/noninsured-crop-disaster-assistance/index>

Emergency Conservation Program

The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) is a program administered through your local county FSA office that assists ranchers with fence construction and repairing other rangeland infrastructure that may have been lost or damaged due to a natural disaster. Ranchers are eligible to receive up to 75% of the cost to implement the project. Funds are dispersed by USDA to county FSA offices as they are available and requested so please contact your county FSA office immediately to help demonstrate the need to request federal funds for local restoration projects.

A fact sheet about the Emergency Conservation Program can be found here https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdfiles/FactSheets/archived-fact-sheets/ecp_2015.pdf:

Environmental Quality Incentive Program

If projects to repair or replace rangeland infrastructure lost due to the fire are not eligible for assistance under other federal disaster assistance programs, ranchers can look to fund projects under the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). EQIP is not a program built or intended to respond to natural disasters so it may not be preferred for addressing immediate needs. Applications for projects can be taken by your NRCS representative at your local County FSA office. Please be aware, approval for projects are subject to several pre-established deadlines throughout the year.