USDA Farm Production and Conservation
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

News Release

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USDA Reminds Agricultural Producers of Available Wildfire Recovery Resources

Lincoln, Neb., May 13, 2026 – Agricultural operations in Nebraska have been significantly impacted by wildfires over the past several months. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has technical and financial assistance available to help farmers and livestock producers recover from these adverse weather events.

"USDA has been implementing a number of programs to support farmers and ranchers as they recover from wildfires," said Hilary Maricle, Nebraska USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director. "I encourage impacted producers to contact their local USDA Service Center for information about options available to assist in their recovery needs. It's important for producers to note deadlines to apply for assistance programs. These deadlines could vary from county-to-county, depending on the location and timing of the wildfire, and the implementation rules for the various programs."

"NRCS is actively providing both technical and financial assistance to help landowners recover from wildfire damage and restore the health and productivity of their working lands," said Nebraska USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist Rob Lawson. "Through our emergency Environmental Quality Incentives Program opportunity, eligible producers may receive support for a variety of conservation practices. Producers affected by the wildfires need to contact their **local USDA Service Center** as soon as possible to complete an application and early start waiver if necessary. NRCS staff are available to assess damage, develop conservation plans, and help determine which practices best support recovery efforts."

These are some of the key programs, along with application deadlines, that are available to assist producers.

Wildfire recovery assistance available through FSA:
Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)
ELAP provides financial assistance for eligible livestock owners for qualifying losses including grazing, purchased or produced feed, additional cost of purchasing feed above normal quantities and costs to transport feed/forage and water to livestock or livestock to feed/forage.

Deadline to apply for ELAP assistance: March 1, 2027, for 2026 losses.

Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)

LIP offers payments to eligible producers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to wildfire. LIP also can provide some assistance to livestock owners who must sell livestock at a reduced price due to an injury from the wildfire.
Deadline to apply for LIP assistance: March 1, 2027, for 2026 losses.

Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)

ECP provides cost-share funding for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate land severely damaged by natural disasters, including wildfires. ECP approved practices can include removal of damaged fences and other debris, cleanup of wind deposited debris, fence repair or restoration, repair or replacement of water facilities, and shelterbelt rehabilitation or replacement, among other options.
Deadline to apply for ECP assistance: ECP is implemented on a county-by-county basis with a 60-day application window once the program is initiated in a county.
The following counties are currently offering ECP for wildfire in 2026, with an application window that began on Monday, April 27, and ends Friday, June 26, 2026:
Morrill Fire: Arthur, Garden, Grant, Keith and Morrill
Cottonwood Fire: Dawson and Lincoln
Road 203 Fire: Blaine, Thomas
Anderson Bridge Fire: Cherry
Ashby and Minor Fires: Grant, Garden
ECP may be implemented in other counties for other wildfires. Contact your county FSA office to determine whether ECP is available in your county.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Emergency Haying and Grazing

The CRP emergency haying and grazing program allows producers to graze livestock or hay on lands enrolled in CRP, with some exceptions or adjustments for the primary nesting season. To increase access to forage for wildfire-impacted producers, FSA authorized emergency use of CRP acres, authorizing all counties in Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming to donate grazing rights or haying authority to livestock producers affected by the wildfires.
Deadline to apply for assistance: Those interested in participating should contact their county FSA office for timelines associated with this program.

FSA also offers a variety of direct and guaranteed farm loans, including operating and emergency farm loans, to producers unable to secure commercial financing. Producers in counties with a primary or contiguous disaster designation may be eligible for low interest emergency loans to help them recover from production and physical losses. Loans can help producers replace essential property, purchase inputs like livestock, equipment, feed and seed, cover family living expenses or refinance farm-related debts and other needs.

Additionally, FSA offers several loan servicing options available for borrowers who are unable to make scheduled payments on their farm loan programs debt to the agency because of reasons beyond their control. Contact your county FSA farm loan team to discuss financing concerns and options related to wildfire impacts.

Wildfire recovery assistance available through NRCS:
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
Implemented by Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Nebraska NRCS is having a special signup period for EQIP assistance for those impacted by wildfires in Nebraska. The core conservation practices for which producers can receive EQIP assistance include: Grazing Management, Cover Crops, Fencing, Mulching, Annual Forages for Grazing Systems, Pumping Plants (for Livestock Water Wells) and Emergency Animal Mortality Management.
Deadline to apply for assistance: May 31, 2026

NRCS is available to provide technical assistance during the recovery process by assisting producers in planning conservation practices on farms, ranches and working forests impacted by wildfires.

More Information

Additional USDA disaster assistance information can be found on farmers.gov, including USDA resources specifically for producers impacted by wildfire. Those resources include the Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool, Disaster-at-a-Glance fact sheet, Loan Assistance Tool, and Natural Disasters and Crop Insurance fact sheet. Additionally, FarmRaise offers an FSA educational hub with LIP and ELAP decision tools as well as farm loan resource videos. For FSA and NRCS programs, producers should contact their local USDA Service Center. For assistance with a crop insurance claim, producers and landowners should contact their crop insurance agent.

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