



Farm  
Production and  
Conservation

Farm  
Service  
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Wyoming Department of Agriculture

2219 Carey Avenue  
Cheyenne, WY 82002

Dear Director Miyamoto,

Thank you for your letter of February 9, 2023, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the adverse weather conditions experienced this winter for livestock producers in Colorado, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming. I apologize for my delayed response.

Your comments and concerns are appreciated. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is aware that many farmers and ranchers across the country are suffering from the effects of current and past weather-related disasters. USDA will work expeditiously in the continued use of its available resources to provide relief to America's producers who have been affected by severe weather conditions.

On March 29, 2023, in accordance with 7 CFR 759.5(a), Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack declared nine Wyoming counties as primary natural disaster areas due to ongoing excessive snow, high winds, and freezing conditions that occurred from January 1, 2023, and continuing. Additionally, 12 counties have been declared as contiguous areas in Wyoming and are also eligible for assistance. Counties in Colorado, Montana, and Utah were also designated as contiguous areas.

Enclosed you will find a signed letter to Governor Mark Gordon that provides a detailed list of all primary and contiguous counties that are currently designated due to this disaster.

A Secretarial disaster designation makes agricultural operations in primary counties and contiguous eligible to be considered for FSA emergency loans, provided certain eligibility criteria can be met. Producers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of a Secretarial disaster declaration to apply for emergency loans. FSA considers each emergency loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of production loss on the agricultural operation and the security and repayment ability of the operator. Local FSA offices can provide producers with additional eligibility and application information.

I know the winter storms have had an especially catastrophic impact on livestock producers. Producers who experience livestock deaths exceeding normal mortality may be eligible for the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP).

To participate in LIP, producers should be prepared to provide acceptable documentation of death losses resulting from an eligible adverse weather event and must submit a notice of loss to their local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is apparent. We know that these livestock losses may not be immediately apparent but need to be reported as soon as producers

are aware of the loss. Producers don't have to make a special trip to town to report their loss. They can call their local FSA office and report the loss by phone.

Additionally, FSA's Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) provides eligible producers with compensation for feed and grazing losses. As a part of additional feed purchases, documented expenses associated with equipment rental fees for hay lifts and snow removal may be covered as well. For ELAP, producers will need to file a notice of loss within 30 days and honeybee losses within 15 days of the loss occurring or becoming apparent.


Although the programs I've mentioned above are targeted to livestock producers, USDA offers a full suite of disaster assistance programs, products and services to help agricultural producers in their recovery from crop, land, infrastructure and livestock losses and damages. More is available on [farmers.gov](http://farmers.gov), including a specific site for [winter storm](#) recovery, the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster Assistance-at-a-Glance](#) guide, and [Loan Assistance Tool](#) can help producers determine program and loan options. Producers interested in these programs should contact their local USDA service center. To find the nearest service center, go to the "Find your Local Service Center" tool at [www.farmers.gov/recover](http://www.farmers.gov/recover).

As Secretary Vilsack stated in his letter to Governor Gordon, we are committed to helping Wyoming producers recover and closely monitoring the situation to ensure all options and existing authorities are being explored. We want to make sure you and your producers are aware, that even absent a request from a Governor, the federal government through the FSA, has assistance available to help producers navigate these difficult times.

My staff and I are open to suggestions on any assistance needs expressed by Wyoming farmers and ranchers and willing to review current programs and policies to offer flexibilities within our authority to implement and we'd be glad to work with your Department of Agriculture to share our improvements to these programs. I would gladly make myself available to meet with you, your designee, members of your team and stakeholder groups and impacted producers to further discuss.

Again, thank you for writing in support of disaster assistance for the producers in Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, and Colorado. If you have further questions, please contact me at 202-720-3467 or you can also have a member of your staff contact the Office of Congressional Relations at (202) 720-7095. Please share this letter with your colleagues.

Sincerely,

  
Zach Ducheneaux  
Administrator