

## Sign-up begins April 15 for ag disaster assistance

Written by Gothenburg Times  
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Farmers and ranchers can sign-up for disaster assistance programs beginning Tuesday, April 15.

“These programs will provide long-awaited disaster relief for many livestock producers who have endured significant financial hardship from weather-related disasters while the programs were expired and awaiting Congressional action,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack.

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) and the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) will provide payments to eligible producers for livestock deaths and grazing losses that have occurred since the expiration of the livestock disaster assistance programs in 2011, and including calendar years 2012, 2013 and 2014.

Enrollment also begins on April 15 for producers with losses covered by the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP).

LIP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather. Eligible livestock includes beef cattle, dairy cattle, bison, poultry, sheep, swine, horses, and other livestock as determined by the Secretary.

LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered grazing losses due to drought or fire on publicly managed land. An eligible livestock producer must own, cash lease, or be a contract grower of eligible livestock during the 60 calendar days before the beginning date of the qualifying drought or fire in a county that is rated by the U.S. Drought Monitor as D2, D3, or D4.

ELAP provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish that have losses due to disease, adverse weather, or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires, as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture.

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TAP provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines damaged by natural disasters.

To expedite applications, all producers who experienced losses are encouraged to collect records documenting these losses in preparation for the enrollment in these disaster assistance programs. Information on the types of records necessary can be provided by local FSA county offices. Producers also are encouraged to contact their county office ahead of time to schedule an appointment.

For more information, producers may review the 2014 Farm Bill Fact Sheet, ELAP and TAP fact sheets online, or visit any local FSA office or USDA Service Center.