



## **NAVIGATING DISASTER ASSISTANCE FOR FARMERS**

### **Hurricanes Harvey and Irma**

Assistance from federal programs can make a world of difference for farmers after a disaster. The next few pages outline current disaster programs, all of which are available to farmers. Be sure to check with the appropriate agency for any changes in details from those listed below. As you review the programs that may be of help to you, the following issues are important to remember:

#### **Document Everything**

Almost every program or policy that can be of help to farmers will require documentation of the loss. After a disaster, only physical safety is more urgent than documenting the damage. Collect photos, notes, descriptions, and keep receipts and anything and everything that will help to prove to a person that has never been to the farm what happened there.

#### **Contact Agencies Right Away**

The agencies that you as a farmer will deal with for the disaster, primarily FEMA and USDA, need to be contacted as soon as possible. This is especially true for USDA if you have not worked with them in the past. Also, keep a record of all of contacts with people from agencies, insurance companies, contractors, and anyone else officially involved in the recovery effort.

#### **Deadlines Will Come Fast**

All disaster programs have deadlines. Some of them come very quickly. Deadlines are listed in the table included, but check with your local agency offices to make sure of deadlines. Some deadlines changed as of September 13, 2017. These changes are included in the table.

#### **Programs Usually Have Appeals Processes**

Disaster relief programs usually include an appeals process. If you are denied from a program, know that “no” is not always the final answer.

#### **Recovery is a Long Process ... and often includes Mental Health Issues**

Recovery from a disaster will be a long process. As is the case with other traumatic experiences, people tend to go through stages as they react to a disaster. Attention to the mental health of everyone involved is essential. Be patient and caring with yourself and others.

#### **Scam Artists Will Come Around**

Unfortunately, scam artists always arrive soon after a disaster. Be careful. Get work proposals in writing, never pay in cash, do not pay more than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the cost up front, and do not let contractors or others force you to make a decision on the spot.

#### **Discrimination is Illegal**

The programs described below are available to all who are eligible. Discrimination is illegal. Each agency should have a discrimination complaint process.

#### **You can call Farm Aid**

We know that navigating these programs can be overwhelming as you work to rebuild. Please know that you can call 1-800-FARM-AID at any time if you need emotional support or help with the details. Farm Aid can put you in touch with someone near you to help you figure things out.