

?20 Indiana counties extending waiver deadline due to temporary FSA office closures

Written by Administrator

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?? Farmers and ranchers in the counties listed below who were attempting to meet the September 16 deadline for certain disaster assistance programs but couldn't due to Hurricane-related temporary Farm Service Agency (FSA) office closures now have an extension.

The counties are: Clark, Dearborn/Ohio, Harrison, Jasper, Jefferson, Jennings, Lake, LaPorte, Newton, Pike, Porter, Ripley, Spencer/Perry, St. Joseph, Starke, Switzerland, Warrick, and Washington.

Farmers and ranchers who are eligible for disaster assistance under certain new Supplemental Agricultural Disaster Assistance programs for losses caused by natural disasters in calendar year 2008, but who are not fully covered by crop insurance or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), now have until ten business days after their local county office reopens to pay the "buy-in" fee for 2008 crop coverage, including grazing lands. Washington County farmers have until Monday, September 29 to take advantage of this "buy-in" waiver.

This extension applies only for those producers who intended to complete the application and pay the "buy-in" fee by September 16, and were unable to complete their business in a timely manner due to the office closures. The extension only applies for the above listed counties.

The 2008 Farm Bill (the Flood, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008) authorized five new Supplemental Agricultural Disaster Assistance programs: the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payment (SURE) program; Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP); Tree Assistance Program (TAP); Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP); and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey bees, and farm-raised fish (ELAP) program. The "buy-in" waiver applies to SURE, TAP, LFP, and ELAP for the 2008 crop production and livestock losses.

To be eligible for the 2008 Farm Bill disaster assistance coverage under SURE, ELAP, and TAP, producers must have enrolled in crop insurance or NAP for all crops in all counties in which they have an interest, including grazing and hay land. To be eligible for disaster assistance for LEP, producers need only have crop insurance or NAP coverage for the specific grazing land for which assistance is being requested.

Since the 2008 Farm Bill was enacted after the crop insurance and NAP application periods closed, producers who did not buy coverage could now comply with this requirement. However, the 2008 Farm Bill provides authority for a waiver for 2008 that allows producers to pay a fee to be eligible for the new disaster assistance.

The crop insurance and NAP coverage requirements will be waived in 2008 for producers who did not obtain crop insurance or NAP coverings by the applicable sales closing date, provided that the producer files an application for a waiver and pays a "buy-in" fee in an amount equal to the 2008 applicable NAP coverage or catastrophic risk protection plan fee for the crop or grazing lands.

In July 2008, USDA announced the "buy-in" waiver deadline and application process. Producers who do not pay the fee by the deadline will not be eligible for disaster assistance under the Supplemental Disaster Assistance programs.

The payment of the applicable fee does not provide participants crop insurance or NAP indemnity payment for their losses; it only makes them eligible to apply for assistance under the Supplemental Agricultural Disaster Assistance programs.

More information on NAP and other farm programs is available at the local FSA service center located at 801 Anson Street in Salem and online at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.