



## Florida Farm Service Agency

### Background

### Tree Assistance Program (TAP) for Citrus Greening Losses

The Agricultural Act of 2014 (the Farm Bill) authorized **permanent disaster assistance programs** (for the life of the Farm Bill) and were made **retroactive back to October 1, 2011**. These programs, administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) are:

- Livestock Indemnity Payment (LIP),
- Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP),
- Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm Raised Fish (ELAP), and
- **Tree Assistance Program (TAP)**
  - TAP provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines damaged by natural disasters, including disease.
  - **For Citrus Greening losses**, assistance applies to replacements, planting cost and site preparation.

On Sept. 17, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack announced **Tree Assistance Program (TAP) eligibility specifically designed to meet the unique needs of citrus growers in Florida** who have suffered devastating losses due to Citrus Greening, also called Huanglongbing (HLB), or yellow dragon disease.

### Applying for Benefits

Producers must work with their local Farm Service Agency office to complete a TAP program application. For local FSA Service Center contact information, please visit: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>.

- All producers applying for TAP will be given a FSA startup packet. These packets may be obtained at the following locations: local FSA office and local citrus organizations.

To insure maximum use of your time and to insure that you are afforded our full attention to your important business needs, **please contact your local FSA Service Center to set an appointment and to discuss any records or documentation that you may need to have with you when you arrive for your appointment. Appointments are required.**

Applications approved on or after Oct. 1, 2014 will be subject to payment sequestration (reduced payments) as mandated by The Budget Control Act passed by Congress in 2011.

- There is **no requirement** that producers apply for TAP benefits prior to Sept. 30 in order to participate in TAP.
- The Sept. 30 date is significant only in terms of payment sequestration requirements mandated by Congress as discussed above.



- In addition to TAP application appointments, FSA employees have been and continue to schedule appointments for producers enrolling in other disaster, commodity and conservation programs enacted by the Farm Bill so appointments are necessary.

Final dates to submit an application and supporting documentation:

- Losses occurring on or after October 1, 2011, through the end of the 2014 calendar year, must submit an application the later of January 31, 2015, or 90 calendar days after the disaster event, or the date the loss is apparent.
- Losses occurring in calendar year 2015 and subsequent years, must submit an application the later of 90 calendar days of the disaster event, or the date when the loss is apparent.

Producers should be prepared to provide the following information:

- All documentation/receipts associated with the cost of removing the affected trees, site preparation, and purchasing new trees.
  - This information will need to be stand/block and year specific
- All insurance documentation for each year in which the producer will make an application for payment.
- All FCIC (crop insurance) information by year for both the coverage of the tree and coverage of the fruit.
- All acreage reports, for each applicable year, completed by producer and any aerial maps available.
- Any inspections and associated paperwork completed on the grove. These inspection reports, if available, will be essential in the administration of the program. Inspections could come from the following:
  - FDACS
  - IFAS
  - CHMA (Citrus Health Management Areas)
- All property appraiser information with maps
- Producers will need to complete the “startup” packet and contact their local FSA office to setup an appointment.

### **Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) Provisions**

Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) limitation of \$900,000 to be eligible for disaster assistance.

### **Payment Limitations**

\$125,000 Payment Limitation per program year for TAP



### **Eligible Tree Types**

- Eligible orchard or citrus trees, bushes and vines are those from which an annual crop is produced for commercial purposes.
- Nursery trees include ornamental, fruit, nut and Christmas trees produced for commercial sale.
- Trees used for pulp or timber are ineligible.

### **Eligible Producers**

To qualify for TAP, orchardists and nursery tree growers must:

- Have suffered qualifying tree, bush or vine losses in excess of 15 percent mortality (adjusted for normal mortality 3%) from an eligible natural disaster for the individual stand;
- Have owned the eligible trees, bushes and vines when the natural disaster occurred, but eligible growers are not required to own the land on which eligible trees, bushes and vines are planted;
- Replace eligible trees, bushes and vines within 12 months from the date the application is approved.
  - The cumulative total quantity of acres planted to trees, bushes or vines for which a producer can receive TAP payments cannot exceed 500 acres annually.

### **Loss Documentation (includes but not limited to):**

- Receipts for trees
- Receipts for labor
- Receipts for site preparation
- Producers may be asked to provide expert verification to determine extent of loss

### **Payments**

For tree, bush or vine replacement, replanting and/or rehabilitation, the payment calculation is the lesser of the following:

- The maximum eligible amount established for the practice by Deputy Administrator of Farm Programs, as follows:
- Tree replacement - \$8
- Planting cost per eligible tree - \$2
- Site preparation per acre - \$500 **or**
- 65 percent of the actual cost of replanting, in excess of 15 percent mortality (adjusted for normal mortality 3%), **and**
- Reimbursement of 50 percent of the cost of pruning, removing, and other costs incurred to salvage existing trees or in the case of tree mortality, to prepare the land to replant the trees, in excess of 15 percent damage or mortality (adjusted for normal tree damage and mortality).
- For more information on TAP and other FSA programs, please visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).