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## **USDA offers storm damage assistance to Massachusetts farmers and communities**

AMHERST, Mass. (Sept. 2, 2011) -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is offering assistance to Massachusetts agricultural producers who sustained damage to crops during Tropical Storm Irene. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can help communities address watershed impairments caused by flooding that are imminent hazards to life and infrastructure.

"FSA has several programs that can be of assistance to agricultural producers who have sustained crop damage," said Richard Burke, FSA Massachusetts State Executive Director. "They include the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), Emergency Loan Program (ELP), Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program, and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP)."

- ECP provides emergency funding and technical assistance for farmers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters and for carrying out emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought.
- NAP provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occurs due to natural disasters, if Risk Management Purchase Requirements (RMPR) have been met.
- Through ELP, landowners may receive emergency farm loans to help recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding, other natural disasters, or quarantine.
- SURE provides financial assistance for crop production and/or quality losses due to a natural disaster, if Risk Management Purchase Requirements (RMPR) have been met.
- TAP provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists to replace eligible trees, bushes, and vines damaged by natural disasters.

"NRCS' Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program addresses watershed impairments such as debris-clogged stream channels, undermined and unstable streambanks threatening bridges, roads, buildings and other public infrastructure," said Christine Clarke, NRCS Massachusetts State Conservationist. "All EWP projects must have a project sponsor such as a city, town or tribal government."

Farmers should contact their local FSA office for information about farm assistance programs. Community officials should contact their local NRCS office for information about EWP. Many FSA and NRCS offices are co-located in USDA Service Centers, which are listed on-line at <http://offices.usda.gov> or in the phone book under Federal Government, U.S. Department of Agriculture. General program information is available on the FSA website at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov) or the NRCS Massachusetts website at [www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov).