

Notices

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency

[Docket ID FSA–2023–0011]

Notice of Funds Availability; Emergency Livestock Relief Program (ELRP) 2022

AGENCY: Farm Service Agency, USDA.

ACTION: Notification of funding availability.

SUMMARY: The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is issuing this notice announcing ELRP 2022. This document provides the eligibility requirements and payment calculation for ELRP 2022 assistance. ELRP 2022 will provide payments to producers who faced increased supplemental feed costs as a result of forage losses due to a qualifying drought or wildfire in calendar year 2022, using data already submitted to FSA through the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP).

DATES: *Funding availability:*

Implementation will begin September 27, 2023.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Kathy Sayers; telephone: (202) 720–6870; email: Kathy.Sayers@usda.gov. Individuals who require alternative means of communication for program information should contact the USDA Target Center at (202) 720–2600 (voice) or dial 711 for Telecommunications Relay Service (both voice and text telephone users can initiate this call from any telephone).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Title I of the Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2023 (Division N of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023; Public Law 117–328) provides \$3,741,715,000 for necessary expenses related to losses of revenue, quality, or production losses of crops (including milk, on-farm stored

commodities, crops prevented from planting in 2022, and harvested adulterated wine grapes), trees, bushes, and vines, as a consequence of droughts, wildfires, hurricanes, floods, derechos, excessive heat, tornadoes, winter storms, freeze, including a polar vortex, smoke exposure, and excessive moisture occurring in calendar years 2022. From that amount, the Secretary of Agriculture is to use up to \$494.5 million to provide assistance to livestock producers for losses incurred during calendar year 2022 due to qualifying droughts or wildfires. The livestock producers who suffered losses due to drought are eligible for assistance if any area within the county in which the loss occurred was rated by the U.S. Drought Monitor as having a D2 (severe drought) for eight consecutive weeks or a D3 (extreme drought) or higher level of drought intensity during the applicable year.

FSA will assist livestock producers through ELRP 2022. This document provides the eligibility requirements and payment calculation for ELRP 2022, which will assist eligible livestock producers who faced increased supplemental feed costs as a result of forage losses due to a qualifying drought or wildfire in calendar year 2022. For eligible producers, ELRP 2022 will pay for a portion of the increased feed costs in 2022 based on the number of animal units (AU), limited by available grazing acreage, in eligible drought counties. Although LFP payments do not have a direct correlation to the increased feed costs incurred, in order to deliver this assistance quickly, FSA is using certain LFP data and a percentage of the payment made through LFP applications will be used as a proxy for these increased supplemental feed costs to eliminate the requirement for producers to resubmit information for ELRP 2022. The ELRP 2022 payment percentage will be 90 percent for historically underserved farmers and ranchers, and 75 percent for all other producers.

According to the US Drought Monitor, more than one-third of the country was categorically in a “D2 Severe” to “D4 Exceptional” drought throughout the entire calendar year 2022. Extreme drought predominately affected areas highly concentrated with rangeland needed for livestock production. Therefore, drought and wildfire caused

economic hardship on producers that were reliant on rangeland, requiring them to purchase supplemental feed at elevated prices to sustain production throughout 2022 and not just during the normal grazing periods. Due to the excessive and expansive drought and wildfires in 2022, livestock participants experienced the following, they:

- Suffered extreme grazing losses;
- Incurred related costs to purchase feed in the grazing period;
- Purchased feed, beyond normal for a drought year, to supplement grazing and to support livestock outside of the grazing period because forage was not available for harvest and storage; and
- Were faced with higher feed costs during 2022 due to less availability of feed resulting from drought severity and feed cost inflation.

LFP provided payments to eligible owners and contract growers of covered livestock who suffered livestock grazing losses due to qualifying drought or fire¹ not to exceed 5 months during the grazing period based on the documented livestock inventory eligible for LFP. The gross LFP calculated payment represented a 60 percent reimbursement of monthly feed costs for a maximum of 5 months, based on a feed grain equivalent that is calculated according to 7 CFR 1416.207 as specified in 7 U.S.C. 9081(c), which uses the higher of the national average corn price per bushel for the 12- or 24-month period immediately preceding March 1 of the calendar year. Because LFP requires the use of this period, it does not take into account any increases in price paid for supplemental feed during 2022. For LFP, the 2022 monthly value of forage, resulted in an LFP payment rate of \$28.37 per month per eligible animal unit for drought. The rate for fire is

¹ A grazing loss due to drought qualifies for LFP only if the grazing loss occurs on land that is native or improved pastureland with permanent vegetative cover or is planted to a crop planted specifically for the purpose of providing grazing for covered livestock, and the land is physically located in a county rated by the U.S. Drought Monitor as having a D2 intensity for at least 8 consecutive weeks or D3 or D4 intensity at any time during the normal grazing period for the specific type of grazing land or pastureland.

A grazing loss due to fire qualifies for LFP only if the grazing loss occurs on rangeland that is managed by a Federal agency and the eligible livestock producer is prohibited by the Federal agency from grazing the normal permitted livestock on the managed rangeland due to a fire.

See 7 CFR 1416.205 for further information on eligible grazing losses under LFP.

based on the number of fire-restricted days and was not a single rate.

LFP does not compensate for the increased costs of supplemental feed, including during 2022 due to drought and wildfires in 2022.

The actual cost of supplemental feed prices, based on corn, alfalfa, and

soybean meal, increased substantially in 2022, compared to previous years. Using the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC)² program model for an adequate supplemental feed ratio, the 5-year average cost to maintain 1 AU for one month was \$66.79, compared to the actual average cost from January

through December, 2022 of \$107.51 per month, an increase of 61 percent.

The cost of feeding one AU per month increased in 2022 compared to the 5-year average by \$40.72 (\$107.51 – \$66.79) for livestock producers affected by drought and wildfires, which was not covered by LFP. See Table 1.

TABLE 1—2022 CALCULATED COSTS (DMC MODEL) TO MAINTAIN 1 AU/MONTH

5 Year avg. cost (corn, alfalfa, soybean meal)	2022 Cost (corn, alfalfa, soybean meal)	2022 Increase in cost	2022 LFP payment rate *	ELRP 2022 payment percentage	Gross ELRP 2022 calculated benefit/ month/eligible AU prior to factor	Percentage of increased supplemental feed costs in 2022 compensated by ELRP 2022 prior to factor
\$66.79	\$107.51	\$40.72	\$28.37	75 90	\$21.28 25.53	52.2 62.7

* The 2022 LFP payment rate may be adjusted according to LFP provisions in 7 CFR 1416.207 for mitigated livestock and restricted grazed animal units due to a qualifying fire.

The ELRP 2022 calculated benefit is based on using the LFP payment rate of \$28.37 per animal unit per month, calculated as follows:

75 percent × \$28.37 = \$21.28 (equivalent to 52.2 percent of increased supplemental feed costs in 2022) and 90 percent × \$28.37 = \$25.53 (equivalent to 62.7 percent of increased supplemental feed costs in 2022).

To stay within the available funding, ELRP 2022 payments for increased supplemental feed costs in 2022 will be factored initially by 25 percent. If funds remain available after initial payments, a second payment of up to 75 percent may be issued.

Because FSA is using LFP information to generate a reasonable approximation for the costs covered by ELRP 2022, no action is required for eligible producers to receive ELRP 2022 payments.

Definitions

The definitions in 7 CFR parts 718, 1400, and 1416 apply to ELRP 2022, except as otherwise provided in this document. The following definitions also apply.

Average adjusted gross farm income means the average of the person or legal entity’s adjusted gross income derived from farming, ranching, and forestry operations for the 3 taxable years preceding the most immediately preceding complete taxable year.

(a) If the resulting average adjusted gross farm income derived from items 1 through 12 of the definition below for “income derived from farming, ranching and forestry operations” is at least 66.66

percent of the average adjusted gross income of the person or legal entity, then the average adjusted gross farm income may also take into consideration income or benefits derived from the following:

- (1) The sale of equipment to conduct farm, ranch, or forestry operations; and
- (2) The provision of production inputs and services to farmers, ranchers, foresters, and farm operations.

(b) The relevant tax years for ELRP 2022 are 2018, 2019, and 2020.

Beginning farmer or rancher means a farmer or rancher who has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years and who materially and substantially participates in the operation. For a legal entity to be considered a beginning farmer or rancher, at least 50 percent of the interest must be beginning farmers or ranchers.

Income derived from farming, ranching, and forestry operations means income of an individual or entity derived from:

- (1) Production of crops, specialty crops, and unfinished raw forestry products;
- (2) Production of livestock, aquaculture products used for food, honeybees, and products derived from livestock;
- (3) Production of farm-based renewable energy;
- (4) Selling (including the sale of easements and development rights) of farm, ranch, and forestry land, water or hunting rights, or environmental benefits;

(5) Rental or lease of land or equipment used for farming, ranching, or forestry operations, including water or hunting rights;

(6) Processing, packing, storing, and transportation of farm, ranch, or forestry commodities including for renewable energy;

(7) Feeding, rearing, or finishing of livestock;

(8) Payments of benefits, including benefits from risk management practices, crop insurance indemnities, and catastrophic risk protection plans;

(9) Sale of land that has been used for agricultural purposes;

(10) Payments and benefits authorized under any program made available and applicable to payment eligibility and payment limitation rules;

(11) Income reported on Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Schedule F or other schedule used by the person or legal entity to report income from such operations to the IRS;

(12) Wages or dividends received from a closely held corporation, and IC-DISC (Interest Charge Domestic International Sales Corporation) or legal entity comprised entirely of family members when more than 50 percent of the legal entity’s gross receipts for each tax year are derived from farming, ranching, and forestry activities as defined in this part; and

(13) Any other activity related to farming, ranching, and forestry, as determined by the Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs (Deputy Administrator).

² ELRP 2022 uses the DMC model to calculate actual feed costs producers experienced in 2022. The DMC formula aims to calculate feed costs to maintain a dairy cow to produce one hundredweight of milk, however FSA is using this model, and converting to maintain 1 animal unit.

DMC, as outlined in 7 CFR part 1430, calculates a national average feed cost using the following three items and are added together:

- (1) The product determined by multiplying 1.0728 by the price of corn per bushel;

(2) The product determined by multiplying 0.00735 by the price of soybean meal per ton; and

(3) The product determined by multiplying 0.0137 by the price of alfalfa hay per ton.

LFP means the Livestock Forage Disaster Program under section 1501 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (7 U.S.C. 9081) and 7 CFR part 1416, subpart C.

Limited resource farmer or rancher means a farmer or rancher who is both of the following:

(1) A person whose direct or indirect gross farm sales did not exceed \$179,000 (the amount applicable to the 2022 program year) in each of the 2019 and 2020 calendar years; and

(2) A person whose total household income was at or below the national poverty level for a family of four in each of the same 2 previous years referenced in paragraph (1) of this definition.

Limited resource farmer or rancher status can be determined using a website available through the Limited Resource Farmer and Rancher Online Self Determination Tool through National Resources and Conservation Service at <https://lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov>.

For an entity to be considered a limited resource farmer or rancher, all members who hold an ownership interest in the entity must meet the criteria in paragraphs (1) and (2) of this definition.

Ownership interest means to have either a legal ownership interest or a beneficial ownership interest in a legal entity. For the purposes of administering ELRP 2022, a person or legal entity that owns a share or stock in a legal entity that is a corporation, limited liability company, limited partnership, or similar type entity where members hold a legal ownership interest and shares in the profits or losses of such entity is considered to have an ownership interest in such legal entity. A person or legal entity that is a beneficiary of a trust or heir of an estate who benefits from the profits or losses of such entity is considered to have a beneficial ownership interest in such legal entity.

Socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher means a farmer or rancher who is a member of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. For entities, at least 50 percent of the ownership interest must be held by individuals who are members of such a group. Socially disadvantaged groups include the following and no others unless approved in writing by the Deputy Administrator:

- (1) American Indians or Alaskan Natives;
- (2) Asians or Asian-Americans;
- (3) Blacks or African Americans;
- (4) Hispanics or Hispanic Americans;

(5) Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders; and

(6) Women.

Underserved farmer or rancher means a beginning farmer or rancher, limited resource farmer or rancher, socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher, or veteran farmer or rancher.

U.S. Drought Monitor is a system for classifying drought severity according to a range of abnormally dry to exceptional drought. It is a collaborative effort between Federal and academic partners, produced on a weekly basis, to synthesize multiple indices, outlooks, and drought impacts on a map and in narrative form. This synthesis of indices is reported by the National Drought Mitigation Center at <http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>.

Veteran farmer or rancher means a farmer or rancher who has served in the Armed Forces (as defined in 38 U.S.C. 101(10)³) and:

(1) Has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years; or

(2) Has obtained status as a veteran (as defined in 38 U.S.C. 101(2)⁴) during the most recent 10-year period.

For an entity to be considered a veteran farmer or rancher, at least 50 percent of the ownership interest must be held by members who have served in the Armed Forces and meet the criteria in paragraph (1) or (2) of this definition.

Wildfire for ELRP 2022 means fire as used in 7 CFR part 1416, subpart C.

Eligible Livestock Producers

Eligible livestock producers for ELRP 2022 are producers with an approved 2022 LFP application. For ELRP 2022, the eligibility criteria applicable to LFP (7 CFR part 1416, subparts A and C) also applies to ELRP 2022, excluding the LFP average adjusted gross income (AGI) limitation. FSA will use livestock inventories, forage acreage, restricted animal units, and grazing days due to fire, and drought intensity levels already reported to FSA for the 2022 Livestock Forage Disaster Program Application⁵ (on form number CCC-853), to determine eligibility and calculate an ELRP 2022 payment, if applicable. Eligible livestock producers are not required to submit an application for ELRP 2022; however, they must have the following additional forms on file

³ The term "Armed Forces" means the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Space Force, and Coast Guard, including the reserve components.

⁴ The term "veteran" means a person who served in the active military, naval, air, or space service, and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable.

⁵ As provided in 7 CFR 1416.206 and publicized by FSA, the LFP application deadline for the 2022 program year was January 30, 2023.

with FSA within 60-days of ELRP 2022 deadline announced by the Deputy Administrator to be eligible to receive a payment:

- Form AD-2047, Customer Data Worksheet;
- Form CCC-902, Farm Operating Plan for an individual or legal entity as provided in 7 CFR part 1400;
- Form CCC-901, Member Information for Legal Entities (if applicable); and
- A highly erodible land conservation (sometimes referred to as HELC) and wetland conservation certification as provided in 7 CFR part 12 (form AD-1026, Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELIC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification) for the ELRP 2022 producer and applicable affiliates.

For a producer to be eligible for a payment based on the higher payment rate for eligible underserved farmers or ranchers or increased payment limitation as described below, the following must be submitted within 60-days of the ELRP 2022 deadline announced by the Deputy Administrator:

- Form CCC-860, Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification, applicable for the 2022 program year⁶; or
- FSA-510, Request for an Exception to the \$125,000 Payment Limitation for Certain Programs, accompanied by a certification from a certified public accountant or attorney as to that person or legal entity's certification, for a legal entity and all members of that entity.

Payment Calculation

The initial ELRP 2022 payment will be equal to the eligible livestock producer's gross 2022 LFP calculated payment⁷ multiplied by the applicable

⁶ An individual who has filed CCC-860 certifying their status as a socially disadvantaged, beginning, or veteran farmer or rancher for a prior program year is not required to submit a subsequent certification of their status for the 2022 program year because an individual's status as socially disadvantaged would not change in different years, and their certification as a beginning or veteran farmer or rancher includes the relevant date needed to determine for what programs years the status would apply. An entity that has filed CCC-860 certifying its status as a socially disadvantaged, beginning, or veteran farmer or rancher for a prior program year is not required to submit a subsequent certification of its status for a later program year unless the entity's status has changed due to changes in membership. Because a producer's status as a limited resource farmer or rancher may change annually depending on the producer's direct and indirect gross farm sales, those producers must submit CCC-860 for each applicable program year.

⁷ The gross LFP calculated payment is the amount calculated according to 7 CFR 1416.207, prior to

ELRP 2022 payment percentage of 90 percent for underserved farmers and ranchers and 75 percent for all other producers multiplied by a 25 percent factor to stay within available funding.⁸ If funds remain available after initial payments, a second payment of up to 75 percent may be issued. For example, an underserved eligible livestock producer's gross 2022 LFP calculation payment is \$10,000 multiplied by the 90 percent ELRP 2022 payment percentage multiplied by the 25 percent factor results in an initial ELRP 2022 payment of \$2,250. The ELRP 2022 payment is intended to represent a reasonable approximation of 63 percent, factored by 25 percent, of the increased supplemental feed costs for that producer in 2022.

Form CCC-860, Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification, must be on file with FSA with a certification applicable for the 2022 program year to receive the higher ELRP 2022 payment rate of 90 percent.

FSA will issue ELRP 2022 payments as 2022 LFP applications are processed and approved. If a producer files the CCC-860 or FSA-510 form and the accompanying certification by the deadline announced by the Deputy Administrator but after their ELRP 2022 payment is issued, FSA will recalculate the ELRP 2022 payment and issue the additional calculated amount as applicable.

Payment Limitation

The payment limitation for ELRP 2022 is determined by the person's or legal entity's average adjusted gross farm income (as defined above). Specifically, a person or legal entity, other than a joint venture or general partnership, cannot receive, directly or

any payment reductions for reasons including, but not limited to, sequestration, payment limitation, and the applicant or member of an applicant that is an entity exceeding the average AGI limitation.

⁸FSA calculates payments based on a higher payment factor for underserved farmers and ranchers (or specific groups included in that term) in several programs, such as Emergency Conservation Program, Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-raised Fish Program (also known as ELAP), and the Tree Assistance Program. FSA has also used higher payment factors for these producers in several recently announced programs: the Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program, the Organic and Transitional Education and Certification Program, previous ELRP Phase 1, and ERP. In addition, NAP provides a reduced service fee and premium for underserved farmers and ranchers. This approach supports the equitable administration of FSA programs, as underserved farmers and ranchers are more likely to lack financial reserves and access to capital that would allow them to cope with losses due to unexpected events outside of their control.

indirectly, more than \$125,000 in payments under ELRP 2022 if their average adjusted gross farm income is less than 75 percent of their average AGI for tax years 2018, 2019, and 2020. If at least 75 percent of the person or legal entity's average AGI is derived from farming, ranching, and forestry related activities and the participant provides the required certification and documentation, as discussed below, the person or legal entity, other than a joint venture or general partnership, is eligible to receive, directly or indirectly, up to \$250,000 in ELRP 2022 payments. To receive more than \$125,000 in ELRP 2022 payments, producers must submit form FSA-510, accompanied by a certification from a certified public accountant or attorney as to that person or legal entity's certification. If a producer requesting the \$250,000 payment limitation is a legal entity, all members of that entity must also complete FSA-510 and provide the required certification according to the direct attribution provisions in 7 CFR 1400.105, "Attribution of Payments." If a legal entity would be eligible for the \$250,000 payment limitation based on the legal entity's average adjusted gross farm income but a member of that legal entity either does not complete an FSA-510 and provide the required certification or is not eligible for the \$250,000 payment limitation, the payment to the legal entity will be reduced for the limitation applicable to the share of the ELRP 2022 payment attributed to that member.

A payment made to a legal entity will be attributed to those members who have a direct or indirect ownership interest in the legal entity unless the payment of the legal entity has been reduced by the proportionate ownership interest of the member due to that member's ineligibility.

Attribution of payments made to legal entities will be tracked through four levels of ownership in legal entities as follows:

- First level of ownership: Any payment made to a legal entity that is owned in whole or in part by a person will be attributed to the person in an amount that represents the direct ownership interest in the first-level or payment legal entity;
- Second level of ownership: Any payment made to a first-level legal entity that is owned in whole or in part by another legal entity (referred to as a second-level legal entity) will be attributed to the second-level legal entity in proportion to the ownership of the second-level legal entity in the first-level legal entity; if the second-level legal entity is owned in whole or in part

by a person, the amount of the payment made to the first-level legal entity will be attributed to the person in the amount that represents the indirect ownership in the first-level legal entity by the person;

- Third and fourth levels of ownership: Except as provided in the second-level of ownership bullet above and in the fourth-level of ownership bullet below, any payments made to a legal entity at the third and fourth levels of ownership will be attributed in the same manner as specified in the second level of ownership bullet above; and

- Fourth level of ownership: If the fourth level of ownership is that of a legal entity and not that of a person, a reduction in payment will be applied to the first-level or payment legal entity in the amount that represents the indirect ownership in the first-level or payment legal entity by the fourth-level legal entity.

Payments made directly or indirectly to a person who is a minor child will not be combined with the earnings of the minor's parent or legal guardian.

A producer that is a legal entity must provide the names, addresses, ownership share, and valid taxpayer identification numbers of the members holding an ownership interest in the legal entity. Payments to a legal entity will be reduced in proportion to a member's ownership share when a valid taxpayer identification number for a person or legal entity that holds a direct or indirect ownership interest of less than 10 percent, at the first through fourth levels of ownership in the business structure, is not provided to FSA. A legal entity is not eligible to receive ELRP 2022 payments when a valid taxpayer identification number for a person or legal entity that holds a direct or indirect ownership interest of 10 percent or more, at the first through fourth levels of ownership in the business structure, is not provided to FSA.

If an individual or legal entity is not eligible to receive ELRP 2022 payments due to the individual or legal entity failing to satisfy payment eligibility provisions, the payment made either directly or indirectly to the individual or legal entity will be reduced to zero. The amount of the reduction for the direct payment to the producer will be commensurate with the direct or indirect ownership interest of the ineligible individual or ineligible legal entity. Like other programs administered by FSA, payments made to an Indian Tribe or Tribal organization, as defined in section 4(b) of the Indian Self-Determination and Education

Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304), will not be subject to payment limitation.

Provisions Requiring Refund to FSA

In the event that any ELRP 2022 payment resulted from erroneous information reported by the producer or if the producer's 2022 LFP payment is recalculated after the ELRP 2022 payment is issued, the ELRP 2022 payment will be recalculated, and the producer must refund any excess payment to FSA, including interest to be calculated from the date of the disbursement to the producer. If FSA determines that the producer intentionally misrepresented information used to determine the producer's ELRP 2022 payment amount, the application will be disapproved and the producer must refund the full payment to FSA with interest from the date of disbursement. Any required refunds must be resolved in accordance with debt settlement regulations in 7 CFR part 3.

General Provisions

General requirements that apply to other FSA-administered commodity programs also apply to ELRP 2022, including compliance with the provisions of 7 CFR part 12, "Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation," and the provisions of 7 CFR 718.6, which address ineligibility for benefits for offenses involving controlled substances. Appeal regulations in 7 CFR parts 11 and 780 and equitable relief and finality provisions in 7 CFR part 718, subpart D, apply to determinations under ELRP 2022. The determination of matters of general applicability that are not in response to, or result from, an individual set of facts are not matters that can be appealed. Such matters of general applicability include, but are not limited to, the ELRP 2022 eligibility criteria and payment calculation.

Participants are required to retain documentation in support of their application for 3 years after the date of approval. Participants receiving ELRP 2022 payments or any other person who furnishes such information to USDA must permit authorized representatives of USDA or the Government Accountability Office, during regular business hours, to enter the agricultural operation and to inspect, examine, and to allow representatives to make copies of books, records, or other items for the purpose of confirming the accuracy of the information provided by the participant.

The Deputy Administrator has the discretion and authority to waive or modify filing deadlines and other

requirements or program provisions not specified in law, in cases where the Deputy Administrator determines it is equitable to do so and where the Deputy Administrator finds that the lateness or failure to meet such other requirements or program provisions do not adversely affect the operation of ELRP 2022. Although producers have a right to a decision on whether they filed applications by the deadline or not, producers have no right to a decision in response to a request to waive or modify deadlines or program provisions. The Deputy Administrator's refusal to exercise discretion to consider the request will not be considered an adverse decision and is, by itself, not appealable.

Any payment under ELRP 2022 will be made without regard to questions of title under State law and without regard to any claim or lien. The regulations governing offsets in 7 CFR part 3 apply to ELRP 2022 payments.

In either applying for or participating in ELRP 2022, or both, the producer is subject to laws against perjury and any penalties and prosecution resulting therefrom, with such laws including but not limited to 18 U.S.C. 1621. If the producer willfully makes and represents as true any verbal or written declaration, certification, statement, or verification that the producer knows or believes not to be true, in the course of either applying for or participating in ELRP 2022, or both, then the producer is guilty of perjury and, except as otherwise provided by law, may be fined, imprisoned for not more than 5 years, or both, regardless of whether the producer makes such verbal or written declaration, certification, statement, or verification within or outside the United States.

For the purposes of the effect of a lien on eligibility for Federal programs (28 U.S.C. 3201(e)), USDA waives the restriction on receipt of funds under ELRP 2022 but only as to beneficiaries who, as a condition of the waiver, agree to apply the ELRP 2022 payments to reduce the amount of the judgment lien.

In addition to any other Federal laws that apply to ELRP 2022, the following laws apply: 15 U.S.C. 714; and 18 U.S.C. 286, 287, 371, and 1001.

Paperwork Reduction Act Requirements

In compliance with the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), the information collection request has been approved by OMB under the control number of 0503-0028. FSA will collect the information from the livestock producers to qualify for the payment to assist with increased

supplemental feed costs. This NOFA is the one-time announcement of the new ELRP 2022 federal financial assistance funding.

Environmental Review

The environmental impacts have been considered in a manner consistent with the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, 42 U.S.C. 4321-4347), the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR parts 1500-1508), and the FSA regulation for compliance with NEPA (7 CFR part 799).

As previously stated, ELRP 2022 is providing payments to eligible livestock producers who faced increased supplemental feed costs as a result of forage losses due to a qualifying drought or wildfire in calendar year 2022. The limited discretionary aspects of ELRP 2022 do not have the potential to impact the human environment as they are administrative. Accordingly, these discretionary aspects are covered by the FSA Categorical Exclusions specified in § 799.31(b)(6)(iv) that applies to individual farm participation in FSA programs where no ground disturbance or change in land use occurs as a result of the proposed action or participation; and § 799.31(b)(6)(vi) that applies to safety net programs.

No Extraordinary Circumstances (§ 799.33) exist. As such, the implementation of ELRP 2022 and the participation in ELRP 2022 do not constitute major Federal actions that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively. Therefore, FSA will not prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement for this action and this document serves as documentation of the programmatic environmental compliance decision for this federal action.

Federal Assistance Programs

The title and number of the Federal assistance programs, as found in the Assistance Listing,⁹ to which this document applies is 10.980—Emergency Livestock Relief Program 2022.

USDA Non-Discrimination Policy

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender

⁹ See <https://sam.gov/content/assistance-listings>.

expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family or parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Individuals who require alternative means of communication for program information (for example, braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and text telephone (TTY)) or dial 711 for Telecommunications Relay Service (both voice and text telephone users can initiate this call from any telephone). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at <https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint> and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by mail to: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or email: OAC@usda.gov.

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Zach Ducheneaux,

Administrator, Farm Service Agency.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency

[Docket ID FSA-2023-00015]

Notice of Funds Availability; 2021 Emergency Livestock Relief Program (ELRP) Phase 2

AGENCY: Farm Service Agency, USDA.

ACTION: Notification of funding availability.

SUMMARY: The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is issuing this notice announcing ELRP Phase 2. This document provides the eligibility requirements and payment calculation for the second

phase of ELRP assistance. ELRP Phase 2 will provide assistance to eligible livestock producers for the loss of the value of winter forage from the deterioration of grazing cover due to a qualifying drought or wildfire during the 2021 normal grazing period, which has been exacerbated by a continued lack of precipitation. This document also makes a correction and amendment to ELRP Phase 1.

DATES: *Funding availability:*

Implementation will begin September 27, 2023.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Kathy Sayers, telephone: (202) 720-7649; email: Kathy.Sayers@usda.gov. Individuals with disabilities who require alternative means for communication should contact the USDA Target Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice) or (844) 433-2774 (toll-free nationwide).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act, (Division B, Title I, Pub. L. 117-43) provides \$10 billion for necessary expenses related to losses of crops (including milk, on-farm stored commodities, crops prevented from planting in 2020 and 2021, and harvested adulterated wine grapes), trees, bushes, and vines, as a consequence of droughts, wildfires, hurricanes, floods, derechos, excessive heat, winter storms, freeze, including a polar vortex, smoke exposure, quality losses of crops, and excessive moisture occurring in calendar years 2020 and 2021. From the \$10 billion, the Secretary of Agriculture is to use \$750 million to assist producers of livestock for losses incurred during calendar year 2021 due to qualifying droughts or wildfires. The livestock producers who suffered losses due to drought are eligible for assistance if any area within the county in which the loss occurred was rated by the U.S. Drought Monitor as having a D2 (severe drought) for eight consecutive weeks or a D3 (extreme drought) or higher level of drought intensity during the applicable year.

On April 4, 2022, FSA announced that assistance for livestock producers would be provided through ELRP (87 FR 19465-19470).¹ ELRP Phase 1 paid for a portion of eligible producers' increased supplemental feed costs in 2021 based on the number of animal units (AU), limited by available grazing

¹ In addition, a clarification to the notice of funds availability for ELRP Phase 1 was published on August 18, 2022 (87 FR 50828-50830).

acreage, in eligible drought counties. In order to deliver this assistance quickly, FSA used certain 2021 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) data and a percentage of the payment made through LFP applications as a proxy for these increased supplemental feed costs to eliminate the requirement for producers to resubmit information for ELRP Phase 1.

To stay within the available funding, ELRP Phase 1 payments were calculated at 90 percent of the gross LFP calculated payment for underserved farmers and ranchers and 75 percent of the gross LFP calculated payment for all other producers.²

This document provides the eligibility requirements and payment calculation for ELRP Phase 2 assistance. It also corrects an error in the ELRP Phase 1 provisions related to payment eligibility and amends ELRP Phase 1 to be consistent with LFP and ELRP Phase 2.

ELRP Phase 2

For each eligible livestock producer who previously received an ELRP Phase 1 payment, FSA will issue an ELRP Phase 2 payment to assist with losses in the value of winter forage from the deterioration of grazing cover due to a qualifying drought or wildfire during the 2021 normal grazing period, which has been exacerbated by the continued lack of precipitation, using the ELRP Phase 1 payment as a proxy to calculate those losses. ELRP Phase 2 assistance is subject to the same ELRP payment limitation provided in the previous notice of funds availability. Because FSA is using LFP and ELRP Phase 1 information to calculate a producer's ELRP Phase 2 payment and determine eligibility due to a qualifying drought or wildfire during the 2021 normal grazing period, no action is required for eligible

² "Underserved farmer or rancher" means a beginning farmer or rancher, limited resource farmer or rancher, socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher, or veteran farmer or rancher. FSA calculates payments based on a higher payment factor for underserved farmers and ranchers (or specific groups included in that term) in several programs, such as Emergency Conservation Program; Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program; and the Tree Assistance Program. FSA has also used higher payment factors for these producers in several recently announced programs: the Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program, the Organic and Transitional Education and Certification Program, Emergency Relief Program, and Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program. In addition, the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program provides a reduced service fee and premium for underserved farmers and ranchers. This approach supports the equitable administration of FSA programs, as underserved farmers and ranchers are more likely to lack financial reserves and access to capital that would allow them to cope with losses due to unexpected events outside of their control.