

## Federal Disaster Assistance Funding Received for Tornado and Tropical Storm Relief

MDAR encourages members of the farming community who have suffered losses to report damages, crop and physical losses to our federal partners at the USDA Farm Service Agency as soon as possible following storm events. Such contact is a critical first step toward securing assistance for disaster recovery efforts. Please see the following update:

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director Richard Burke recently announced (or announced this week) an important package of disaster assistance to help farmers, land owners, communities and others recover and rebuild after a year in which a wave of natural disasters swept across the State. Massachusetts funding, totaling \$4.07 million, provides financial and technical assistance to help rebuild and repair land damaged on account of flooding and tornado disasters last year. Relief will be provided through Farm Service Agency's Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) and Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP).

The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) program will contribute \$2.31 million to producers to help remove debris from farmland, grade and shape farmland, restore permanent fences and restore conservation structures damaged by a natural disaster. FSA county committees determine eligibility based on on-site inspections of damaged land and considering the type and extent of damage. For land to be eligible, the natural disaster must create new conservation problems.

The Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) program will provide \$1.76 million in payments to eligible owners of nonindustrial private forest (NIPF) land in order to carry out emergency measures to restore land damaged by a natural disaster.

USDA immediately responds to disasters across the country, ranging from record floods, droughts and tropical storms, with direct support, disaster assistance, technical assistance, and access to credit. In the past 3 years, USDA provided 103,000 loans to family farmers totaling \$14.6 billion. Over 50 percent of the loans went to beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

Contact information for the Massachusetts County offices of the USDA FSA is available at:

<http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=ma&agency=fsa>.



MDAR's mission is to ensure the long-term viability of agriculture in Massachusetts. Through its four divisions – Agricultural Conservation & Technical Assistance, Agricultural Markets, Animal Health, and Crop and Pest Services – MDAR strives to support, regulate and enhance the rich diversity of the Commonwealth's agricultural community to promote economically and environmentally sound food safety and animal health measures, and fulfill agriculture's role in energy conservation and production. For more information, visit MDAR's website at [www.mass.gov/agr](http://www.mass.gov/agr), and/or follow at [twitter.com/agcommishsoares](https://twitter.com/agcommishsoares). For our ongoing list of events and workshops, visit and bookmark: [www.mass.gov/agr/events/coming\\_up.htm](http://www.mass.gov/agr/events/coming_up.htm).