



**Natural Resources
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USDA-NRCS IN GEORGIA ANNOUNCES SPECIAL SIGN UP TO ASSIST THOSE AFFECTED BY HURRICANE IRMA

ATHENS, GA, November 27, 2017 — State Conservationist Terrance O. Rudolph of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced today a special statewide Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) sign up for farmers, ranchers and non-industrial forestland owners that suffered damage because of Hurricane Irma. The deadline to apply is December 15, 2017.

EQIP is available to help these producers treat crop, grazing and forest land damages caused by high winds, rainfall and floodwaters directly related to Hurricane Irma.

All 159 counties in Georgia are eligible for this special signup, but high priority will be given to the seven counties hardest hit as determined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) September 15, 2017 declaration ([FEMA-4338-DR](#)), as amended. These high priority counties are Camden, Charlton, Chatham, Coffee, Glynn, Liberty and McIntosh.

"NRCS in Georgia has been working with our sister agencies over the last few months to ensure the public is aware of and receiving any eligible assistance USDA has to offer," said Rudolph. "This special sign up is another example of our commitment to help those affected by natural disasters. If someone is just now hearing about our assistance or realizing the damages that Hurricane Irma has caused, please let us help you help your land."

Those producers with Irma related damages should visit their local [USDA Service Center](#) and submit their [Conservation Program Application \(NRCS-CPA-1200\)](#) before the December 15 deadline, or as soon as possible to expedite any necessary damage assessments. If they already have an application submitted through recent sign-ups, they should contact their local office to ensure it is included in this special funding cycle.

Farmers and ranchers seeking NRCS financial and technical assistance can also sign up for EQIP if already a USDA client, on-line via [Conservation Client Gateway \(CCG\)](#). Conservation practices available through this EQIP funding are specifically designed to address flood and wind damage, and excessive runoff to address natural resource concerns caused by the hurricane and provide future protection from exceptional storm events.

EQIP was originally established under the 1996 Farm Bill and reauthorized in the 2014 Farm Bill. It provides technical and financial assistance to landowners to voluntarily address soil, water and other natural resource concerns on private lands.

More information on NRCS conservation programs can be found at <http://www.ga.nrcs.usda.gov> under the Programs tab.

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