

TAP Update: New Rule Offers More Help to Replant Citrus

There is good news for citrus growers who want to replant: relaxed TAP program rules can double reimbursement.

More financial help now is available for Central Florida citrus growers who want to replant eligible trees after Hurricane Irma.

Through the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP), the U.S. Department of Agriculture has budgeted \$34 million to help farmers and ranchers recover from natural disasters in 2017. For those looking to replace eligible trees, there's help through the nationwide Tree Assistance Program known as TAP.

The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 removed restrictions limiting payments through the program, while increasing the acreage cap. For growers, that means reduced costs to replant and a speedier recovery from losses.

Growers are now eligible for partial reimbursement on up to 1,000 acres per program year, which is double the previous amount.

The ELAP funding comes on the heels of a \$2.36 billion allotment recently announced through



by Phillip Rucks

USDA's Farm Service Agency. Those funds, offered through its new 2017 Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program, bring disaster aid to more than \$3 billion.

According to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, there were 16 separate, billion dollar disasters in 2017. Almost eight percent of the population, or more than 25 million people, were affected.

The Bartow-based citrus cooperative Florida Citrus Mutual, which has been seeking the TAP changes, has been working with the industry and government leaders to obtain disaster relief. Mike Sparks, FCM's executive vice president and chief executive officer, will give a report on hurricane assistance at the Florida Citrus Industry Annual Conference June 13-15 at Hyatt Regency Coconut Point, Bonita Springs. The conference will include information about the battle against citrus greening and a grower panel.

You won't want to miss it. Register at FCM's website, flcitrusmutual.com. Hotel registrations, which are separate, can be made by calling (888) 421-1442. A Florida Citrus Mutual group rate is available.



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