



Farm Service Agency

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News Release

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USDA Farm Service Agency Announces Tree Assistance Program (TAP) Sign-up

COLUMBUS, Ohio – April 10, 2014 – Ohio Farm Service Agency (FSA) Executive Director, Steven Maurer, announced today that orchardists and nursery tree growers who experienced losses from natural disasters that occurred on or after Oct. 1, 2011, can sign up for the Tree Assistance Program (TAP) **beginning Tuesday, April 15, 2014**. TAP was authorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014 as a permanent disaster program.

“Ohio has been hit hard this past winter with record low temperatures and with spring finally here, orchard and vineyard producers will begin to see the extent of damage,” said Maurer.

TAP provides financial assistance to qualifying fruit and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines damaged by natural disasters.

“President Obama and Secretary Vilsack made it a priority to begin enrollment for these programs as quickly as possible upon the enactment of the 2014 Farm Bill,” said Maurer. Eligible tree types include trees, bushes or vines that produce an annual crop for commercial purposes. Nursery trees include ornamental, fruit, nut and Christmas trees that are produced for commercial sale. Trees used for pulp or timber are ineligible.

To qualify for TAP, fruit growers must suffer a qualifying tree, bush or vine loss in excess of 15 percent mortality from an eligible natural disaster. The eligible trees, bushes or vines must have been owned when the natural disaster occurred; however, eligible growers are not required to own the land on which the eligible trees, bushes and vines were planted.

If the TAP application is approved, the eligible trees, bushes and vines must be replaced within 12 months from the date the application is approved. The cumulative total quantity of acres planted to trees, bushes or vines for which a producer can receive TAP payments, cannot exceed 500 acres annually.

If physical evidence of the lost trees, bushes, or vines no longer exists, the owner must provide documentation to determine the eligible trees, bushes, or vines existed and were lost on each stand because of the approved disaster condition.

Examples of documentation can include:

- Receipts for the original purchase of the eligible trees, bushes, or vines where TAP is requested,

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- Documentation of labor and equipment used to plant or remove the eligible trees, bushes, or vines that were lost,
- Chemical, fertilizer, or other related receipts to substantiate the existence of the eligible trees, bushes, or vines.
- RMA appraisal worksheet may be used by COC to substantiate applicant's certification of trees lost.

For more information, producers are encouraged to review the [TAP fact sheet](#) online or contact your USDA FSA Service Center.