



## Disaster Assistance in 2008 Farm Bill

As you probably know, one of the new features of the 2008 Farm Bill was that permanent disaster assistance programs were included. What this inclusion does is now automatically makes disaster assistance programs available to producers in **parishes that have been declared as a disaster area** without having Congress have to create new legislation to make funds available.

Unlike in some previous disaster assistance programs, however, the programs outlined in the 2008 Farm Bill require that producers have crop insurance or non-insured crop disaster assistance (NAP) coverage on **all the land for which assistance is being requested**. Since the 2008 Farm Bill was not passed to after some of the insurance sign-up period, the Farm Bill allows producers, who did not get crop insurance or NAP coverage for 2008 to “buy-in” to the disaster assistance program.

Every producer whose crops, including grazing lands, are not fully covered by crop insurance or NAP may take advantage of this one-time opportunity. **The buy-in fee is due no later than Sept. 16, 2008. Those who miss this opportunity will not be eligible for disaster assistance.** Producers are also reminded that the payment of the applicable buy-in fee does not afford the producer crop insurance or NAP coverage; it only affords eligibility for the 2008 disaster programs. Producers who meet the definition of "Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource," or "Beginning Farmer or Rancher," do not have to meet the Risk Management Purchase Requirement, and, therefore, are not required to pay the buy-in fee.

The buy-in fee for 2008 eligibility only for either the catastrophic risk protection insurance (CAT) or NAP is \$100 per crop, but not more than \$300 per producer per administrative county, or \$900 total per producer for all counties less any previously paid fees for CAT and/or NAP. Producers can contact their local administrative FSA County Office to file the application for waiver and pay the applicable fees. Payment of the applicable fees will allow the producer to be eligible for benefits for losses under the following disaster assistance programs:

- Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program,
- Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP),
- Tree Assistance Program (TAP), and
- Emergency Assistance Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP).

This “buy-in” is **not** required for producers to participate in the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP). **Producers are strongly encouraged to contact their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office to determine if this “buy-in” waiver is needed for their operation.**

## **SURE Program**

One of the programs made available with the passage of the 2008 Farm Bill was the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) program. The USDA has recently released a spreadsheet based calculator that will allow you to estimate the amount of disaster assistance that may be available to a producer. The calculator can be found at the following webpage:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/fbapp?area=fbhome&subject=landing&topic=landing>