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## More Georgia counties receive drought disaster declaration

Farmers in counties are eligible for low interest emergency (EM) loans

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*On Dec. 11 the USDA issued a disaster declaration for a total of 52 Georgia counties to help farmers mitigate their losses due to ongoing drought conditions. (photo by UGA CAES/Extension, creative commons/flickr.com)*

MACON, Ga. — On Dec. 11 the USDA issued a disaster declaration for a total of 52 Georgia counties to help farmers mitigate their losses due to ongoing drought conditions. The 19 Georgia counties with the primary natural disaster designation are Baldwin, Burke, Butts, Jasper, Jenkins, Johnson, Lamar, Laurens, Meriwether, Monroe, Newton, Pike, Rabun, Rockdale, Screven, Spalding, Stephens, Upson, and Washington. Producers in the Georgia counties of Banks, Bibb, Bleckley, Bulloch, Clayton, Coweta, Crawford, DeKalb, Dodge, Effingham, Emanuel, Fayette, Franklin, Glascock, Gwinnett, Habersham, Hancock, Harris, Henry, Jefferson, Jones, Morgan, Putnam, Richmond, Seminole, Talbot, Taylor, Towns, Treutlen, Troup, Twiggs, Walton, Wheeler, and Wilkinson are also eligible to apply for emergency loans because they are contiguous to counties in Georgia and bordering states that received primary designations.

Farmers in counties named either primary disaster areas or contiguous counties are eligible for low interest emergency (EM) loans from USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met. **The deadline is June 19, 2020**, to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. FSA has a variety of programs in addition to the EM loan program to help eligible farmers recover from adversity.

Other FSA programs that provide assistance, but do not require a disaster declaration, include the Emergency Conservation Program, the Livestock Forage Disaster Program, the Livestock Indemnity Program, the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program, Operating and Farm Ownership Loans and the Tree Assistance Program.

Interested farmers may contact their local USDA Service Centers for more information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs. Additional information is also available online at [www.farmers.gov/recover](http://www.farmers.gov/recover).

–Georgia Farm Bureau