

## USDA-NRCS Offers Post-Blizzard/Flood Assistance; Damage Assessments Underway

**In the wake of the “bomb cyclone” and flooding in Nebraska, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is meeting with landowners, partners, and other agencies to assess damages and offer technical and financial assistance.**

**Disaster recovery assistance programs through NRCS include the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program’s (EQIP) Livestock Mortality Initiative.**

### **Watershed Assistance**

**“EWP is designed to install recovery measures to safeguard lives and property as a result of a natural disaster,” said Craig Derickson, NRCS Nebraska state conservationist. “We have teams assembled to complete damage survey reports. Our goal is to get the damage survey reports completed as quickly as possible so we can request funding for the recovery work.”**

**Watershed impairments that the EWP Program addresses include debris-clogged stream channels, scoured or eroded bridges, and undermined and/or unstable streambanks that pose an imminent threat to public infrastructure (i.e.: bridges, county roads, etc.).**

**“It is work we can do with a local sponsor to help mitigate damages so lives and property are protected and additional hardships are not heaped upon the devastated community,” Derickson said.**

**As farmers and ranchers cope with the aftermath of these disasters EWP-type services are key to preventing further damage. The program requires local government bodies or other sponsor to assist with on-the-ground work.**

**“Generally, NRCS will pay up to 75 percent of the restoration costs, and the sponsor is responsible for the remaining balance of funding needs, which can include in-kind support,” Derickson said.**

**Potential sponsors seeking assistance through EWP should work with their local USDA service center, which can be found at:**

**<https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>**

### **Farmer/Rancher Assistance**

**Through the EQIP Livestock Mortality Initiative, farmers and ranchers can**

**apply for assistance to properly dispose of livestock lost during the blizzard/flooding. Applications are being accepted now through May 1. Additional application cutoff dates may be announced if there is demand and available funding.**

**EQIP can also provide long-term support to repair livestock fencing and install conservation practices to reduce erosion and improve soil health. NRCS is taking applications and encourage interested landowners to contact their local office for more information.**

**For more information on available NRCS assistance, contact a local USDA service center, or visit [www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov). Information about all USDA disaster assistance programs available to ag producers may be found at [www.farmers.gov/recover](http://www.farmers.gov/recover).**