

Dept. of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection: Sec. Harsdorf urges farmers to report snowstorm losses

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MADISON – Secretary Sheila Harsdorf is reminding Wisconsin farmers who sustained property damage or livestock losses from recent snow storms to document and report losses to their county USDA Farm Service Agency offices.

Many parts of Wisconsin received two feet or more of heavy, wet snow April 13-14. It caused roof collapses in barns that killed livestock in some cases. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection has been in contact with the FSA state office since the storm. “It is critical that farmers document and report and damage to their local FSA office because they may be eligible for disaster assistance programs. If farmers haven’t already contacted their insurers, they need to do that as well,” said Secretary Harsdorf.

Assistance may be available to farmers who lost livestock, grazing land and fences. There are also safety net programs, including the Livestock Indemnity Program and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish program.

In addition, the FSA uses loss reports to determine whether to seek a disaster designation from the USDA Secretary. A disaster designation makes farmers in the county eligible for low-interest loans if they cannot access private financing.

A directory of county FSA offices is available at
<https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=wi&agency=fsa>.

Even before the storm, farmers were stressed because of low commodity prices and a late planting season, Harsdorf noted. She reminded farmers that the Wisconsin Farm Center is available to help with lender mediation and to help them deal with financial and emotional stress. The hotline number is 1-800-942-2474. Staff are available 7:45 a.m.-4:30 p.m. weekdays, and a voicemail system will take messages over the weekend.