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## V.I. Farmers Affected by Drought May Be Eligible for Financial Assistance Through USDA Program, V.I. Dept. of Agriculture Has Announced

Community Center / **Published On June 16, 2021 05:39 PM /**

Staff Consortium **June 16, 2021**

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The V.I. Department of Agriculture announced Wednesday that it successfully maintained its program with the U.S. Drought Monitor which shows the location and intensity of droughts across the country. The local program was conducted in conjunction with UVI's Cooperative Extension Service Environmental Health and Climate Team.

According to the release, for the second year in a row, the U.S. Virgin Islands has experienced a drought during the current dry season.

This designation qualifies the Virgin Islands for the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) through the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA). The program offers

payments to eligible livestock producers and grazed forage crop acreage. These payments can help cover up to 60 percent of monthly feed costs, which is calculated by using the normal carrying capacity of the grazing land.

To be eligible for LFP, persons or legal entities must be registered with the USDA FSA; a U.S. citizen, resident alien, partnership of U.S. citizens, a legal entity organized under State law, or an Indian tribe or tribal organization defined in the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act that:

- Own, cash or share lease, or be a contract grower of covered livestock during the 60 calendar days before the beginning date of a qualifying drought.
- Provide pastureland or grazing land for covered livestock, including cash-rented pastureland or grazing land as of the date of the qualifying drought or fire that is either:
- Physically located in a county affected by a qualifying drought during the normal grazing period for the county; or
- Rangeland managed by a federal agency for which the otherwise eligible livestock producer is prohibited by the federal agency from grazing the normally permitted livestock because of a qualifying fire.
- Certify that they have suffered a grazing loss because of a qualifying drought or fire; and
- Timely file an acreage report for all grazing land for which a grazing loss is being claimed.

To apply, contact USDA FSA for an appointment at (340) 773-9146, x100. For more information, visit <https://bit.ly/3hG9j53> or email us at [info.doa@doa.vi.gov](mailto:info.doa@doa.vi.gov).

The V.I. Dept. of Agriculture thanked Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett along with U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Thomas J. Vilsack for their assistance in securing this funding.