

JB PRITZKER, GOVERNOR · JOHN M. SULLIVAN, DIRECTOR

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Governor Pritzker Takes Additional Steps to Assist Farmers Hurt By Record Rainfall and Flooding

SPRINGFIELD, IL – With near-record flooding and a serious delay in the planting season, Governor JB Pritzker has convened appropriate members of his cabinet to ensure that Illinois farmers can access all available state resources, including pooling efforts and resources between the Illinois Department of Agriculture and the Illinois Emergency Management Agency.

“Agriculture is the backbone of our state and to see our grain and livestock farmers and farming communities having to make these tough decisions is heartbreaking,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “I know farmers have had to make difficult planting decisions this year due to extreme weather conditions—I’ve instructed my staff and agencies to provide assistance to help ease the pressures felt by farmers across Illinois.”

Governor Pritzker recently spoke with USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Director, William Graff, to ensure that Illinois is high on the federal authority’s agenda when the FSA State Emergency Board (SEB) is scheduled to meet on June 27th. At that time, the board can recommend to the Governor that an agriculture disaster declaration be declared, which would allow the Governor to request additional federal assistance for farmers in counties that have been impacted by flooding and excessive rain.

“Farmers need to contact their local county FSA offices and report their planted acres as soon as possible—certainly before July 15th,” said John Sullivan, Director IDOA. “The sooner the planted and ‘prevent plant’ acres are reported, the sooner the federal government can best determine the extent of losses to farmers and producers.”

“This is one of the worst floods to inundate our state in more than a quarter of a century,” said Acting IEMA Director Alicia Tate-Nadeau. “The flood of 2019 has impacted more than 40% of state’s population, outside of Cook and the collar counties. In the weeks to come, as the water recedes, we will begin to see the damage of this flood. County damage assessments will be a critical tool in qualifying for federal disaster dollars. As we move forward, IEMA will continue to work with county emergency managers as they work to identify the true cost of this great flood.”

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In addition to taking initial steps to secure federal assistance, IDOA and IEMA are also undertaking several other initiatives:

- IDOA will offer a \$400,000 cover crop incentive program for farmers who, due to the lateness of planting, have filed Prevented Planting claims which means those acres will lay fallow this year. Cover crops reduce nutrient runoff, conserve soil and prevent soil erosion, and is an alternative to chemical weed control. Local county soil and water conservation districts will assist to administer the program.
- IDOA's website www.agr.state.il.us now has a "Flood Assistance" tab with links to available State and Federal flood assistance resources.
- IEMA has launched a comprehensive flood recovery website (www.Illinois.gov/2019Floods) designed to address the needs of those impacted by severe flooding. From emergency housing assistance to replacing SNAP benefits or agricultural aid, countless state agencies have come together to offer help to those in need.
- IEMA will continue to facilitate coordination between the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and local levee districts to evaluate the health and integrity of levees throughout the state.
- IEMA will work with local governments to identify projects and programs dedicated to local mitigation and remediation.
- IEMA continues to work to enhance communication networks in rural Illinois through the deployment of Starcom technology and IPAWs messaging to alert residents of impending threats to health, safety and property.
- IEMA, through the State Emergency Operations Center, will facilitate the removal of debris, access to roads/rivers, and availability of necessary resources to address agribusiness logistical concerns.

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