



2017 Flooded Orchards – What to do and Resources

In our counties, there are two main issues that are related to the 2017 storms:

- 1- Orchards **outside the levees** along the rivers that are or have been flooded from river seepage due to high river flows and/or overflowing ditches/canals.
- 2- Orchards **inside the levees** next to riverbanks that had sloughing (slippage) when the high water in the Feather River was suddenly dropped in late February.

Depending on where your orchard is located will determine what programs may or may not be available.

What to do now

Keep records and take photos of flooded orchards and damage. It is important to have this information to prove that damage or losses occurred from a particular storm event. This includes:

- When water was first seen, length of time standing in orchard, when it drained, etc. When the rivers rise again, if water returns and for how long.
- Leafing, flowering, fruit/nut set dates
- Note dates if/when symptoms are seen that could indicate waterlogging and/or Phytophthora crown and root rot: a lack of terminal growth, small, yellow and drooping leaves, sparse foliage, dieback, or a general collapse of the tree
- Note dates if symptoms of aerial Phytophthora are seen: cankers on branches and trunk (walnuts tend to bleed, peaches, prunes, and almonds will gum).
- Within the levees, assess the number of trees uprooted or lost from sloughing.

Reporting damage/losses:

- File a report of loss with your Agricultural Commissioner. Even if you do not know the extent of losses yet, documenting the flooding in orchards outside the levees and physical damage and tree losses inside the levees is advised.
- Links to the forms:
 - Sutter County: <https://www.co.sutter.ca.us/weatheragriculturaldamage>
 - Yuba County: Call 530 749-5400 or pick up the form in the office at the Yuba County Government Center.

Determining Damage:

It likely will take months before the extent of losses from disease and/or waterlogging can be assessed. As the trees become active and the weather warms up, we can expect to start seeing losses that could continue through the hot

summer when trees with damaged root systems or crowns typically collapse. When you start seeing any of the symptoms listed above, contact someone who can diagnose the cause such as your Pest Control Advisor (PCA), or UCCE Farm Advisors Franz Niederholzer (prunes, almonds) or Janine Hasey (walnuts, peaches, kiwifruit) at (530) 822-7515. The loss of trees from disease or waterlogging will need to be tied to the storm events and disaster declarations.

Potential Disaster Relief Resources

At this point, we don't know fully what programs are available and who will qualify for what programs. The following is a list of some programs that may be available and links to them for more information:

1- County Assessor

The Revenue and Taxation Code allows reassessment of property damaged by misfortune or calamity. If there is at least \$10,000 worth of losses of tree value currently on the tax roll, you can obtain a claim form from the Assessor's office.

2- Tree loss calculators based on UCCE cost studies through Agricultural & Resource Economics at UC Davis. When an individual tree or vine is destroyed in an orchard or vineyard due to natural causes, vehicle accident, shaker damage, or other causes such as flooding, the link below provides workbooks on specific crops to calculate the value of a single tree or vine lost to any cause taking into account the loss of future income. For the crops below, there are two worksheet versions: "With Replanting" and "Without Replanting". The tree or vine is replanted and eventually generates income in "With Replanting" worksheet. The tree or vine is not replanted in the "Without Replanting" worksheet because of the age of the orchard or other reason preventing replanting such as loss of the tree and land from sloughing.

<https://coststudies.ucdavis.edu/tree-vine-loss/>

Crops include almond, cling peach, prune, and walnut trees.

3- Farm Service Agency (FSA)

All the programs available through the FSA can be accessed at <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/>

The USDA press release on disaster assistance programs:

<https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2017/03/08/usda-reminds-individuals-and-small-businesses-california-nevada-and>

Tree Assistance Program (TAP)

https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdafiles/FactSheets/2015/tap_fact_sheet_oct_2015.pdf

The TAP provides financial assistance to eligible nursery and tree crop growers to rehabilitate or replant eligible trees or vines lost by natural disasters. To qualify, there must be more than 18% (15% + normal 3%) mortality loss in an orchard block. Final date to submit an application and supporting documentation is 90 days after the disaster event or the date when the loss is apparent.

Emergency Loan Assistance

A program which provides emergency loans to help cover production and physical losses in counties declared as disaster areas by the President.

Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)

ECP provides emergency funds for cost sharing with farmers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by flooding. This program will **not** apply to orchards inside the levees.

For more information on FSA disaster programs, visit

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/> or your local FSA county office at 1521 Butte House Rd Ste. A, Yuba City, CA, Phone: 530-671-0850

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