

The Farm Advocacy Program continues to operate through the LIC, with Mrs. Betty Puckett working as-needed, on a contractual basis. The LIC continues to offer small emergency grants (as available), to farmer's in distress, to help with their personal/household discretionary needs.

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## **Farm Aid - Narrative Report for the Fall Board Meeting September 2020 Zoom Meeting**

From: Betty Puckett, Farm Advocate



### **Summary of Work and Activities March 2020 - August 2020**

Working with the LIC since 1986, I have counseled farmers, including women, black, and Hispanic claimants, from various states, even as far away as California. I am often contacted from individuals that I have assisted in the past. I am still working with various farmers regarding FSA & other debts, and gender discrimination complaints. Most of these cases are winding down, but often they have taken years to resolve. Many of the hotline calls from farmers continue to be referred to me by Farm Aid. I get calls from many areas of the country.

As reported in March, the LIC received a new grant from Farm Aid, Inc., in December of 2019, which allows a total of \$2,500 for individual emergency grants to be given to farmers with a maximum of \$500 per farm family. Rarely is an emergency grant given that is less than that \$500 maximum. In May of this this year, the LIC sent out a grant to a cattle and poultry farmer in northern Louisiana, after their farm was severely damaged by tornadoes. That grant used the last of previous funds from Farm Aid, leaving the newer \$2,500 in funds still available. We are working to get flyers out to coops and other avenues that may reach farmers, particularly in light of the recent devastation from Hurricane Laura. Grants are given out to farm families in cases of disasters or extraordinary medical/financial challenges. Per IRS regulations, grants are not to be used for actual farm operations but rather for the household/ discretionary needs of the farm families. The grant application is available online at the LIC website.

We are always looking for more ways to get this type of information out to farmers, some of which do not belong to any organizations that might otherwise help keep them abreast of such grant possibilities. Often these farmers do not have access to the Internet or current news sources. Please help us to spread the word. We have a simple one-page flyer available in PDF for circulation.

Please support your local farmers when you are able to, by purchasing local products. Also, please keep the local farm families in your prayers as they struggle to keep up with industrialized farming and foreign imports.