



## Your Farm Service Agency Online Monthly Newsletter Covering the Latest Topics

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Hanalei, Kauai before and during heavy rains



### Relief from March Rains for Maui & Kauai Producers

Farmers and ranchers in Kauai and Maui counties who have suffered damages from the severe rainstorms in early March of this year may be eligible for assistance under the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) administered by the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

Criteria for the program include:

- ◆ Damage is so costly to rehabilitate that Federal assistance is required to return the land to productive agricultural use
- ◆ Damage is unusual in character and is not the type that would recur frequently in the same area
- ◆ Damage materially affects the productive capacity of the farmland
- ◆ Damage impairs or endangers the land if not treated

A producer qualifying under ECP may receive cost share assistance up to 75 percent of the eligible cost of restoration

measures, with no producer eligible to receive more than \$200,000 per natural disaster occurrence.

The following types of practices may be eligible for cost share assistance:

- ◆ Removing debris from farmland
- ◆ Grading, shaping, or re-leveling severely damaged farmland
- ◆ Restoring permanent fences
- ◆ Restoring conservation structures



Flooded Field

To be eligible for assistance, practices may not be started until all of the following are met:

- ◆ An application for cost-share assistance has been filed (Form FSA-848, Cost Share Request)
- ◆ Onsite inspection of the damaged area by the FSA
- ◆ The agency responsible for technical assistance, such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service, has made a needs determination

Producers who have suffered a qualifying loss from this natural disaster may sign up for ECP now through May 8, 2012.

For further information please contact the Kauai County FSA Office at 245-9014, or on Maui, Molokai or Lanai call the Maui County FSA Office at 871-5500, extension 2.

**Hawaii & Pacific Basin  
Farm Service Agency  
Offices:**

**Hawaii & Pacific Basin  
FSA State Office**

737 Bishop St, Ste 2340  
Honolulu, HI 96813  
Ph: (808)441-2704  
Fax: (808)441-2705

**Hawaii County FSA  
Hilo**

154 Waiianuenue Ave,  
Rm 102  
Hilo, HI 96720  
Ph: (808)933-8381 x 1  
Fax: (808)933-8345

**Kona**

The Kona Office is  
closed until further notice  
Please call 933-8381 x 1  
for service or information

**Honolulu County FSA**

99-193 Aiea Heights Dr,  
Suite 114  
Aiea, HI 96701  
Ph: (808)483-8600 x 2  
Fax: (808)483-8615

**Kauai County FSA**

4334 Rice St, Rm 103  
Lihue, HI 96766  
Ph: (808)245-9014 x 2  
Fax: (808)246-4639

**Maui County FSA**

77 Hookele St, Ste 201  
Kahului, HI 96732  
Ph: (808)871-5500 x 2  
Fax: (808)873-6183

**Guam FSA Office**

400 Route 8, Ste 306  
Mongmong, GU 96910  
Ph: (671)472-7568  
Fax: (671)472-7580

**American Samoa FSA**

Pago Plaza Bldg, Ste  
213  
Pago Pago, AS 96799  
Ph: (684)633-1031 x121  
Fax: (684)633-7614

**Hours**

Monday—Friday  
8:00 am—4:00 pm

**Website**

[www.fsa.usda.gov/hi](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/hi)

## Second Sign Up Announced for Vog Damaged Fences

Hawaii County producers who have livestock fencing that has prematurely corroded due to vog or volcanic emissions may be eligible for cost-share assistance under the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP). This disaster program, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency (FSA), provides cost-share assistance if the damage is so severe and costly that Federal assistance is required to return the damaged area to productive agricultural use.



Vog emissions from Halema'uma'u Crater, Hawaii

The following emergency conservation practice is available to ranchers and other producers on the island:

EC3 – Restoring or replacing fences needed to restore the land to productive agricultural use to include:

- ◆ Cross fences
- ◆ Boundary fences
- ◆ Cattle gates

Fences must be used for agricultural purposes. Ornamental fences are not eligible for assistance.

Cost-share and approvals will be based on:

- ◆ Age of fence at the time of disaster
- ◆ If fence was used for purpose of excluding or enclosing livestock
- ◆ Type of fence existing before disaster
- ◆ Extent of damage of fence

Areas of consideration include Puna, Kau, South and North Kona, South Kohala, the Mana Road areas, and up to Pohakaloa Training Area including the sheep station areas.

A producer qualifying for EC3 assistance may receive cost share not to exceed 75 percent of the cost of installing eligible meas-

ures. Cost-share assistance is limited to \$200,000 per person per natural disaster.

**Note:** This is a second sign-up of the previous ECP program for vog damages. Any cost-share received from the original sign-up will be counted towards the \$200,000 limitation.

To be eligible for cost shares, practices shall not be started until all of the following are met:

- ◆ An application for cost-share assistance has been filed
- ◆ The local FSA County Committee (COC) or its representative has conducted an onsite inspection of the damaged area
- ◆ A needs determination has been made

Requests for assistance will be accepted at the Hawaii County FSA Office in Hilo through May 10, 2012. For additional eligibility requirements and program limitations regarding ECP, visit the Farm Service Agency website at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov) or contact the Hawaii County Office in Hilo at (808) 933-8381.

## Minority Farm Register Now Open



Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages minority farmers and ranchers to voluntarily join the USDA Minority Farm Register to receive information and opportunities from USDA agencies. The new Register is an outreach tool designed to reach underserved farmers and ranchers who are not currently enrolled in USDA loan, farm or conservation programs.

By joining the Register, minority producers may receive outreach materials, newsletters, and program announcements from USDA agencies. They may also receive information and assistance from other USDA-approved outreach partners, such as community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and minority-serving educational institutions. USDA will carefully control access to and use of the Register.

Registration forms are available in Spanish (AD-2035SP) and English (AD-2035) on the FSA web site [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov) under "Forms".



## Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

The Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program allows producers of eligible commodities, such as fruits and vegetables, to obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade commodity storage and handling facilities.

The new maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL is \$500,000. Participants are now required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with Credit Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent drying and handling equipment. New loan terms of 7, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan. Interest rates for each term rate may be different and are based on the rate which CCC borrows from the Treasury Dept.

Applications for FSFL must be submitted to the FSA county office that maintains the farm's records. An FSFL must be approved before any site preparation or construction can begin. For more information about FSFL please visit your FSA county office or [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

Loan Interest Rates for April 2012	
Farm Operating - Direct	1.25%
Farm Ownership - Direct	3.375%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.500%
Emergency	3.75%
Limited Resource	5.000%

## Fast Information and Deadlines for Producers

Like many other organizations, Farm Service Agency (FSA) is working smarter and more efficiently to conserve resources and taxpayer dollars. The Hawaii and Pacific Basin FSA has moved to instant delivery electronic notifications for notices, newsletters and reminders via email and text.

Producers are encouraged to provide their email address to the local FSA office to receive newsletters and other reminders by email. Your email will automatically be added to our electronic news system "Gov Delivery." County Committee ballots will continue to be mailed to all eligible producers.

**Spread the Word** – Subscribe now to receive free email updates by going to: [www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe).

## Honoring Veterans - Lester Ueda, Hawaii County Executive Director

Retired Sergeant First Class, Lester Ueda, served 19 years in the United States Army. He served in various bases throughout the United States and international sites such as Germany, Korea, and England. After retiring from the Army, Lester returned home to Hawaii.



Lester Ueda

A bit restless in retirement, Lester went to work with Natural Resource Conservation Service, but decided it was time for a change when he saw an advertisement in the local paper for a Program Technician vacancy with the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Coincidentally, Lester's mother worked as a Program Technician with the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), retiring in 1994. Between his mother's career at FmHA and growing up on a coffee farm in Kona, you could say he was destined to work in and with the agricultural community.

Today, Lester has 16 years of service with the Farm Service Agency under his belt and has served as the County Executive Director for Hawaii County since 2008. When asked about FSA's role in the lives of producers he shared, "FSA provides a safety net for farmers and ranchers who suffer from natural disasters. Many ranchers have told me if it were not for the disaster programs, they would have given up." Lester went on to share, "I also believe the people who work for FSA provide a valuable service to the community by reaching out to farmers and ranchers and helping them understand the sometimes complex programs. Our employees work hard and put in long hours to ensure the farmers and ranchers are supported. We strive to reach as many of them as possible. The employees are very dedicated to our agricultural community here on the Island of Hawaii."

### USDA Factoid: Did you know?

One of the most significant changes in the 2007 Census of Agriculture is the increase in female farm operators, both in terms of the absolute number and the percentage of all principle operators. There were 306,209 female principle operators counted in 2007, up from 237,819 in 2002 an increase of almost 30 percent.



Issac and Gladys Kanoa harvesting fern shoots

## From Financial Stress to a Workable Plan - Maui FSA Aids the Kanoa's

Issac Kanoa is a Hawaiian taro farmer in Keanae, Maui. After several years working as a licensed diesel mechanic, he and his wife Gladys chose to go back to the taro patches to live as generations of his family had with one difference; the farm has been fully mechanized. When they needed credit to help expand the operation they turned to the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

"We have been clients of FSA since about 1979, and FSA was there every time we needed assistance to purchase equipment," shared Gladys Kanoa. The Kanoa's have been farming for over 30 years and have seen changes at FSA over time. Gladys noted, "About 9 years ago Vance Christensen became the Maui FSA Farm Loan Manager and a whole new level of service began. Vance would visit our farm several times a year checking on both our progress and our needs. With his help we were able to purchase a dump truck and refinance a tractor."

"This year, during a particularly difficult financial time, FSA came to our rescue again," Gladys continued. "During loan servicing, FSA proposed the possibility of refinancing our high interest farm credit card and other loan debt. Now we are able to see our loan balances being paid down faster. We couldn't believe it; from financial stress to a workable plan!"

Vance Christensen retired in December 2011, and John Tamashiro has now taken the reigns as the Farm Loan Manager for Maui County. Tamashiro boasts over five years with FSA in the Farm Loan Program. His FSA career started at the Honolulu County Office as a Farm Loan Officer and continued when he took a Farm Loan Assistant Manager position with the Hawaii County

Office. John's background in underwriting and as a loan officer with First Hawaiian Bank and Finance Factors respectively have given him a solid foundation for his years of service with the Farm Service Agency.



John Tamashiro, Farm Loan Manager for Maui County

"I look forward to maintaining the high standards of service that retired Farm Loan Manager Vance Christensen and Program Technician Faith Umetsu have provided over the years," shared Tamashiro. "Every island has a unique agricultural signature and I am excited to immerse myself in the agricultural scene and getting to know the producers of Maui. My goal in accepting this position is to continue to provide efficient assistance and relief during the various challenges our farmers sometimes face."

## Rural Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency makes loans to rural youths to establish and operate income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, Future Farmers of America, and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization's advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5,000.



### Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

- ◆ US citizenship (which includes Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands,) or a legal resident alien status;
- ◆ Between 10 years to 20 years of age;
- ◆ Reside in a rural area, city or town with a population of 50,000 or fewer people;
- ◆ Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above;
- ◆ Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the project and the loan, along with providing adequate supervision.

Stop by your county office for help in preparing the application forms.



## Direct and Guaranteed Loans

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is committed to providing family farmers with loans to meet their farm credit needs. If you are having trouble getting the credit you need, ask your local FSA loan officials about direct and guaranteed loans.

Depending upon your individual financial situation, farm ownership and operating loans may be available on a direct or guaranteed basis. Direct operating and ownership loans each have a \$300,000 limit. These same guaranteed loans have a limit of \$1,214,000. A combination of the same type of direct and guaranteed loans, such as for farm ownership purposes, has a limit of \$1,514,000. FSA guaranteed loans have a one-time fee of 1.5%.

For more information, contact your local FSA county office.

## Adjusted Gross Income

The USDA and the Internal Revenue Service have established an electronic information exchange process for verifying compliance with the adjusted gross income (AGI) provisions for the department's farm programs. Written consent is required from each producer or payment recipient to initiate the tax review process. No actual tax data will be included in the report that IRS sends to Farm Service Agency.

This ensures that payments are not issued to producers whose AGI exceeds certain limits. The limits set in the 2008 Farm Bill are \$500,000 nonfarm average AGI for commodity and disaster programs; \$750,000 farm average AGI for direct payments; and \$1 million nonfarm average AGI for conservation programs.

Participants in Commodity Credit Corporation farm programs subject to average AGI rules must submit form CCC-931 to their local FSA County Office by June 15, 2012 to avoid interruption of program benefits. This form may be obtained from local FSA and NRCS offices or online at:

<http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/mainservlet>.

## Dates to Remember

April 16, 2012	Hawaii County FSA disaster assistance presentation to Hawaii Tropical Fruit Growers at Kona Cooperative Extension Office, 7:00 pm
April 19, 2012	Maui County Committee meeting
April 20, 2012	Earth Day at Hilo Community College in Hawaii County
May 1, 2012	Deadline to sign up for Ornamental Nursery NAP 2013
May 10, 2012	Deadline to sign up for ECP VOG in Hawaii County
May 28, 2012	Memorial Day - FSA offices closed
June 1, 2012	Deadline to file for SURE 2010
June 15, 2012	County Committee nomination period begins
July 4, 2012	Independence Day - FSA offices closed
August 1, 2012	Last day to file County Committee nomination forms
September 18, 2012	Deadline to apply for emergency drought loans for Hawaii County
October 9, 2012	Deadline to apply for emergency vog loans for Hawaii County
November 5, 2012	County Committee Election Ballots Mailed to Eligible Voters
December 3, 2012	Last day to return voted County Committee Ballots to FSA county office
Ongoing	Hawaii CREP (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program) Signup



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