

Your Farm Service Agency Online Monthly Newsletter Covering the Latest Topics

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County Committee Voting Begins—Ballots Due Dec. 03

Ballots for this year's Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committee election were mailed to eligible voters on November 5, 2012. Voters must complete their ballots and return them to the county office by the close of business on December 3, 2012. If mailed, ballots must be post-marked by midnight December 3, 2012.

The candidates in this year's election are:

Hawaii County – LAA#2 Kona and Mauna Kea; Tax Map Zones 5, 6, 7 and 8

- Lee Sugai

Maui County – LAA#1 North, Northwest and Northeast of Kuihelani Hwy, Hana Hwy, and Haleakala Hwy. Includes Hana, Keanae, Haiku, Makawao, Paia, Kahului, Wailuku, Kahakuloa and Lahaina.

- Paul Lopes
- Anna Palomino

Honolulu County – LAA#3 West and Northshore of Oahu. Includes Waipahu, Ewa, Kunia, Wahiawa, Makakilo, Nana-kuli, Waianae, Waialua and Mokuleia.

- Patsy Oshiro

Kauai County – LAA#3 Anahola, Alio-manu, Papaa, Moloaa and all of the Hana-lei District

- Philip D.B. Davies
- Barbara "Sachi" Shinoda
- Dick I. Yoshii

Guam County – LAA#1-1 Anderson AFB, Yigo and parts of Dededo (north of Ysengsong)

- Teddy Concepcion
- Lourdes Stein
- Ernest Wusstig

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands – LAA#2-1 Island of Rota:

- David Calvo
- James Manglona

For complete bios of each candidate, see the FSA September newsletter at http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/15000201209_01.pdf

Eligible voters in a local administrative area who have not received a ballot should contact their FSA county office staff.

Voter Requirements - Persons meeting requirements in 1 *or* 2, *plus* 3, below, are eligible to vote:

1. Be of legal voting age and have an interest in a farm or ranch as any of the following:
 - The authorized representative of an entity
 - Both spouses when property is owned jointly
 - Spouses in community property states.
2. Is not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations on an entire farm.
3. Participates or cooperates in any FSA program that is provided by law.

Discrimination Prohibited - No person shall be denied the right to vote because of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation or marital or family status.

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 Waiuanue 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
CNMI (670)234-0896

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

2013 NAP Coverage Deadline

The 2013 Non-Insured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage deadline is **December 1, 2012** for vegetables, fruits, livestock forage and honey. The sales closing date of September 1, 2012 has passed for value loss crops such as turf grass, floriculture, nursery, and aquaculture. The value loss sales closing date notice was published in the August Newsletter. Noni was recently added as a covered crop for the NAP Program, please inquire with your Farm Service Agency for questions regarding the new crop.

The NAP program is designed to cover losses due to damaging named tropical storms and typhoons. To be eligible, a producer shall pay a nonrefundable service fee in an amount that is equal to the lesser of \$250 per crop, per administrative county; or \$750 per producer, per administrative county, and not to exceed a total of \$1,875 for multiple county producers.

NAP coverage will not begin until 30 days after your application is filed and the administrative fee has been paid. The administrative fee is non re-fundable.

Selling Land

If you plan on selling farmland, you should be aware of several consequences associated with Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs. For example, if you are planning to sell land that is enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), the buyer must agree to continue the enrollment. If the buyer does not continue the CRP contract, you may be required to refund all of the payments you have received to date. Reviewing program implications with your local FSA staff before completing a sale of farmland is always a prudent precaution.

Changing Banks

Almost all Farm Service Agency (FSA) payments are made electronically using direct deposit.

To keep the system running smoothly, it is critical to keep the county office staff up to date on changes in your financial institutions.

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, FFA and other non-profit organizations, such as school or faith-based groups. An individual within the organization must provide oversight on the youth loan projects. Projects must produce sufficient income after expenses to repay the loan and the goal is to provide youth with a practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5,000.

Make an appointment with the Farm Loan Programs staff if you would like to get more information about this worthwhile program.

Interest Rates for November 2012

Farm Operating - Direct	1.125%
Farm Ownership - Direct	3.125%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50%
Emergency	2.125%
Limited Resource	5.000%

FSA Signature Policy

Using the correct signature when doing business with Farm Service Agency (FSA) can save time and prevent a delay in program benefits. The following are FSA signature guidelines:

- Spouses may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) programs in which either has an interest, unless written notification denying a spouse this authority has been provided to the county office; and
- Spouses shall not sign on behalf of each other as an authorized signatory for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations, or other similar entities.

For additional clarification on proper signatures please contact your local FSA office for an appointment.



2011 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program Applications

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) will continue to accept Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) applications for 2011 crop losses through June 7, 2013. The SURE Program provides payments to producers when crop revenues are less than the crop guarantee, with payment equal to 60 percent of the difference between the crop guarantee and revenue.

To determine the guarantee and revenue for the SURE Program, all crops on all farms for a producer are included in the calculation. Payments under the SURE Program are limited to \$100,000.

To be eligible for the 2011 SURE Program, producers must have crop insurance on all insurable crops. In Hawaii, these crops are coffee, macadamia nuts, banana, papaya and nursery. Crop insurance is not available on any crops in Guam, CNMI and American Samoa. For crops that are not covered by crop insurance, producers must have purchased Non Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage at FSA. The crop insurance and NAP purchase requirement is waived for crops that are not economically significant to the farming operation. In addition, for SURE payment the producer must have at least one (1) crop with a 10 percent production loss.

For more information concerning the 2011 SURE program or other Farm Service Agency programs, call your local FSA office for an appointment or visit www.fsa.usda.gov



Hispanic and Women Farmer and Rancher Claims Period

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced that Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA in past decades can file claims between September 24, 2012 and March 25, 2013.

The process offers a voluntary alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or female farmer and rancher who can prove that USDA denied their applications for loan or loan servicing assistance for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000.

As announced in February 2011, the voluntary claims process will make available at least \$1.33 billion for cash awards and tax relief payments, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief, to eligible Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers. There are no filing fees to participate in the program.

The Department will continue reaching out to potential Hispanic and female claimants, around the country to get the word out to individuals who may be eligible for this program so they have the opportunity to participate.

Call center representatives can be reached at 1-888-508-4429. Claimants must register for a claims package (by calling the number or visiting the website) and the claims package will be mailed to claimants. All those interested in learning more or receiving information about the claims process and claims packages are encouraged to attend meetings in your communities about the claims process and contact the website or claims telephone number.

Website: www.farmerclaims.gov

Phone: 1-888-508-4429

Claims Period: Sept. 24, 2012 - Mar. 25, 2013

Independent legal services companies will administer the claims process and adjudicate the claims. Although there are no filing fees to participate and a lawyer is not required to participate in the claims process, persons seeking legal advice may contact a lawyer or other legal services provider.

To read Secretary Tom Vilsack's entire news release click on the following link: <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=2012/09/0309.xml&contentidonly=true>



First Ever FSA Guaranteed Loan In the Territory of Guam to Finance Traditional Healer Raising Medicinal Plants

By Doreen Rivera, Territory of Guam FSA Office

One of the traditional Chamorro practices is the use of medicinal plants, or as the locals say, “Amot.” The healer is called a “suruhanu” or “suruhana,” depending on whether the person is male or female. The healer uses medicinal plants and herbs to cure a wide variety of ailments and diseases. As in other places, Guam has seen a decline over the years in its traditional healing arts, but one local woman took it upon herself to venture into the jungles of Guam to find and propagate medicinal plants on her farm and turn it into a small but growing value-added agricultural enterprise. This local woman is Mrs. Bernice Nelson and her farm is called “Amot Taotao Tano Farm,” which in Chamorro means “Medicine of the People’s Land.”

Mrs. Nelson’s passion started with a handful of worms which became the foundation of her compost business. Her dream was to produce top soil for a medicinal garden. The income she produced from her compost farm over four years allowed her to achieve her goal. However, she still needed a small kitchen to prepare and package her products.



Bernice Nelson’s garden of medicinal plants

She approached Ryan Rupley, Officer Trainee at Guam’s Community First Federal Credit Union, for help. Mr. Rupley was very receptive and immediately contacted Fred San Nicolas, Guam Farm Loan Officer, about a small guaranteed operating loan. Miki Miyasato, who manages Guam Farm Loan Program (FLP) from her office in Hawaii County stated that, “We are excited because we have been pushing value-added enterprises all over Hawaii State and the western and southern Pacific islands because raw, fresh market produce alone can create oversupply problems in small, isolated markets and the shelf life is very limited.”

“In Hawaii State and the Pacific Basin we use a centralized guaranteed loan processing and servicing system and I was a little surprised when the Guam office and Ms. Jennifer Orot, Member Business Relationship Officer at the credit union contacted me,” said Steve Bazzell, Chief of the Farm Loan Programs for Farm Service Agency (FSA). The bigger lenders can’t make a profit on the small commercial agriculture loans and the bigger loans are financially risky, even with a 90-percent FSA guarantee because of the typhoon threat. It made perfect sense that a credit union might be a better match for our program, and thanks to the marketing efforts of the Guam FLP staff, we were able to hook up to assist Mrs. Nelson. Even though Guam is 3,800 miles west of Hawaii, using image scanning, email, and assistance from the Guam staff, we were able to process it from start to finish in maybe ten business days. It was gratifying to work with the credit union because they plunged ahead with none of the hesitation that we normally see at the bigger lenders.”

Diane L. Ley, State Executive Director, went on to say that, “We are proud to have reached this historical milestone with the guaranteed loan program in Guam and hope to expand this and all other FSA program assistance to our Asian and Pacific Islander producers in Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands.”



The funding from her Guaranteed Loan built this kitchen where Mrs. Nelson prepares and packages her products



**Joint Interagency Agricultural Workshop:
Kunia, Oahu, August 20, 2011**

Farming for Partnerships Reaps Results

Fallow Fields

Jason Shitanishi started with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) in 1995 and was surprised to discover that very few producers knew about the Agency. Over the years he would attend agricultural meetings, workshops, and conferences held by various State, Federal, University, and non-profit agricultural agencies/organizations, and noticed low and decreasing attendance. Workshops were oftentimes narrowly focused on a specific topic or program that was of little interest to the majority of agricultural producers in the community. At conferences there would be more government and university officials and staff than local farmers.

There was an ongoing change in agricultural demographics on Oahu. Since the late 70's there had been a steady flow of immigrants from Southeast Asia, particularly Laos and Vietnam who were starting small family vegetable farm operations, most of whom spoke English as a second language, or not at all. There was little meaningful outreach to underserved immigrant minority farmers. Unfortunately, organizers with limited resources were going to great lengths in preparing and holding public meetings which had low interest and attendance from the immigrant minority farming community. It was readily apparent that there needed to be a change in organizing public relation efforts to reach underserved agricultural producers on Oahu.

Sowing and Cultivating Partnerships

In 2006, an effort was started on Oahu to partner with various Federal, State, University, and non-profit agricultural agencies and organizations to hold a joint interagency workshop for local and underserved immigrant minority farmers. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Farm Service Agency strongly supports outreach to underserved minority agricultural producers, but has limited outreach funding and resources. *"If you build it, they will come"* may be a useful mantra for constructing baseball diamonds in cornfields, but it does not work very well

for organizing public forums amongst various agencies and organizations with differing agendas, programs and services.

The Honolulu County FSA Office needed to find a primary partner who shared the same customer base and target audience, along with an organization within the immigrant minority agricultural community to assist with outreach efforts. The University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Services (UH-CTAHR), Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service (CSREES) had an outreach program for local and immigrant farmers. The fit and timing was there for the partnership, and they continue to be an invaluable outreach partner providing support and assistance with needed resources and funding. The majority of small sized immigrant farm operations on Oahu were operated by Laotians. With this in mind, The Lao Farmers Association of Hawaii was asked to join as a primary outreach partner, and they also continue to generously support outreach efforts to underserved immigrant minority farmers on Oahu.

Various Federal, State, County, and non-profit agricultural and immigrant minority support agencies and organizations with programs and services of interest to local and immigrant minority farmers on Oahu were contacted and asked to partner and provide presentations at the workshop. The interest and support was overwhelming with 15 agencies and organizations signing on to provide presentations on programs and services from farm loans, disaster assistance, conservation programs, and pesticide use, to agricultural park land leases. It was a win-win proposition for all involved. Farmers would be given the opportunity to learn about a great number of programs and services, and agricultural agencies and organizations would be able to reach a large number of underserved local and minority farmers in the community at one large workshop. The table was set for the inaugural "Joint Interagency Agricultural Workshop for Local and Immigrant Farmers".

The final step would be planning the details, and getting the word out. We needed to have the workshop on a day and time that was convenient for the farmers, not government staff, and we thought it would be best to have it at a location that farmers felt comfortable with. Agricultural leaders within the local immigrant minority farming community (Chinese, Lao, Thai, and Vietnamese) were enlisted to serve as consultants, spokespeople, and interpreters to directly reach out to farmers and inform them of the workshop.

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Immigrant Farmers Assistance Workshop

A project by UH-CTAHR's Local Immigrant Farmer Education Program (LIFE), Laotian Farmers Association of Hawaii, and the USDA Farm Service Agency

The Immigrant Farmers Assistance Workshops have become an annual event.

Farming for Partnerships Reaps Results Cont'd from page 5

An immigrant farm operation kindly offered their farm warehouse for the event. After consulting with immigrant agricultural leaders, Saturday, September 2, 2006, was selected with the workshop running from the late afternoon into the early evening followed by Thai dinner and refreshments, along with Lao music and dancing generously donated by the Lao Farmers Association of Hawaii. The Pacific Gateway Center, a local non-profit organization providing support services for immigrants on Oahu, would provide Lao and Thai language interpretation services.

Reaping the Benefits

Thanks to the support of the partners (government, non-profit, agricultural leaders in the community, and especially the farmers) the workshop was a great success with over 70 immigrant farmers in attendance!

Agricultural agency and organization partners were pleasantly surprised with the participation and interest. Local and immigrant minority farmers appreciated the effort and support shown by agricultural government and non-profit organizations in holding an informative workshop and coming out on a weekend evening. A pesticide specialist who had been working hard on outreach to the local and immigrant farmers on Oahu commented, "I just wanted to let you know that what I saw on Saturday evening blew me away! My company and the University of Hawaii have been working with the Lao farmers for the last 6 years. This is the first time I have seen so many of them together in one place and you are to be congratulated on your efforts. I was also told by the farmers that this was a first time event! It was truly remarkable! Thanks for your contributions."

The workshop has become an annual outreach event providing underserved local and immigrant minority agricultural producers with invaluable information on finance/credit, record keeping, farm land lease opportunities, good agricultural practices, pesticide use, food safety, conservation, along with a whole range of other useful agricultural and small business topics. Most of the original partners continue to actively participate and support joint outreach efforts to this day. Last year's joint outreach workshop was featured in a Honolulu Star

Advertiser article, "Immigrant Farmers Reap Harvest of Opportunities".

The USDA Farm Service Agency and other agencies/organizations participating in joint workshops have received a noticeable increase in inquiries and participation by immigrant minority farmers and continue to partner in outreach efforts not only on Oahu, but on neighbor islands, also. The Farm Loan Program in the Honolulu County FSA Office has gone from less than 10% immigrant minority loans in their loan portfolio in 2006 to over 60% presently. There has been a similar increase in immigrant minority participation in FSA disaster and price support programs. It took the time, support and assistance of staff at many different agricultural agencies and organizations, and especially the local immigrant minority farming community to obtain the level of mutual trust and cooperation that exists today.



Author and Honolulu County Executive Director Jason Shitanishi, speaking at a joint inter-agency agricultural outreach workshop

Recognition goes to outreach partner agencies and their front line staff who were there from the start over seven years ago. Farm Service Agency thanks our partners for their continued assistance, support, valuable time, and commitment in support of local agricultural producers in our community:

- UH-CTAHR CSREES through the Local & Immigrant Farmer Education (LIFE) Program
- Laotian Farmers Association of Hawaii and its network of agricultural leaders
- Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Oahu Resource Conservation and Development (ORC&D)
- Hawaii State Department of Agriculture – Loan, Plant Industry, and Agricultural Development Divisions
- The Pacific Gateway Center through its assistance with foreign language interpretation services

We continue striving together to improve our efforts to support and assist local agricultural producers in our community.



Dates to Remember	
November 22	FSA Offices closed for Thanksgiving Holiday
December 1	2013 NAP deadline for vegetables, fruits, livestock forage and honey
December 3	Last day to return completed County Committee ballots to FSA County Offices
March 13, 2013	Deadline to apply for emergency loans due to drought in Hawaii County, Maui County, and Honolulu County
March 25, 2013	Deadline to file a claim under the Hispanic and Women Farmer and Rancher Claims Process.
May 27, 2013	Deadline to apply for emergency loans due to drought in Kauai County
Ongoing	Hawaii CREP (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program) sign-up

Need Information

The Hawaii and Pacific Basin Farm Service Agency (FSA) internet site contains news and information on FSA programs, an FSA calendar, and hot links to other agriculture related sites.

Find the information you are looking for at: www.fsa.usda.gov/hi

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