



# Hawaii & Pacific Basin NEWSLETTER

June 2016



Your Farm Service Agency Online Monthly Newsletter Covering the Latest Topics

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## County Committee Nominations Open

The nomination period for all Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committees will begin on June 15, 2016. Nomination forms must be postmarked or received in the FSA County Office by August 1, 2016.

County Committees are unique to FSA and allow producers to have a voice in federal farm program implementation at the local level. To be eligible to serve on the FSA county committee, a person must participate in an agency administered program, be eligible to vote in a county committee election and reside in the Local Administrative Area (LAA) where they are nominated. All producers, including women, minority and beginning farmers and ranchers are encouraged to participate in the nomination and election process.

Nominations and elections are set for:

- Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands County – LAA #2 Saipan.
- Guam County – LAA #2 Parts of Yona (north of Route 17) to parts of Dededo (south of Ysengsong Road).
- Hawaii County – LAA #3 Hamakua and Waiakea Districts.
- Honolulu County – LAA #1 South East Oahu including Pearl City, downtown Honolulu, Hawaii Kai to Waimanalo.
- Kauai County – LAA #2 Kamalomalo, Kealia, Kapaa, Waipouli and North and South Olohena.
- Maui County – LAA #3 Molokai and Lanai.

## County Committee Continued...

Producers may nominate themselves or others as candidates. Organizations representing minority and women farmers and ranchers may also nominate candidates. To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign form FSA-669A. The form and more information about county committee elections is available online at: [www.fsa.usda.gov/elections](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections).

Elected county committee members serve a three-year term and are responsible for making decisions on FSA disaster, conservation and price support programs, as well as other important federal farm program issues. County committees consist of three members.

Farm Service Agency will mail election ballots to eligible voters beginning November 7, 2016. Ballots are due back in the FSA County Office by mail or in person no later than December 5, 2016. Elected county committee members will take office January 1, 2017.

For more information about county committees, contact your [FSA County Office](mailto:FSA County Office) or visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/elections](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections).

## Attention Apple Users

If you are an Apple user who receives online communications through GovDelivery from Farm Service Agency using the mail app on your iPhone or iPad, you may have noticed a problem with hyperlinks in the table of contents. The problem is being worked on, but in the meantime, you can use the macro to view the newsletter or bulletin as a web page and use the hyperlinked table of contents. To open the macro, click "View it as a Web page" at the bottom of the page.

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<b>Office Hours: Monday—Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm</b>	
<p><b>Next County Committee Meeting Dates:</b></p> <p><u>Hawaii County</u> - July 15, 2016 9:00 am</p> <p><u>Honolulu County</u> - June 17, 2016 3:00 pm</p> <p><u>Kauai County</u> - June 16, 2016 9:00 am</p> <p><u>Maui County</u> - June 16, 2016 8:30 am</p> <p><u>Guam County</u> - August 10, 2016 9:00 am</p> <p><u>CNMI County</u> - August 10, 2016 9:00 am</p> <p>Contact the County Office to confirm meeting date and time, as budget constraints may limit the County Committee's ability to meet each month. A list of County Offices, contact numbers and addresses may be found at: <a href="http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/hi_cof_staff.pdf">http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/hi_cof_staff.pdf</a></p>	

## Hawaii, Maui & Kauai Producers Eligible for Disaster Assistance

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has designated Hawaii, Kauai and Maui counties as primary natural disaster areas due to damages and losses caused by a recent drought. Losses include both production and physical losses.

Qualified producers in these counties are eligible for low interest emergency (EM) loans from USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers will have eight months from the date of the declaration (see Dates to Remember in this newsletter) to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses. Producers can borrow up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses, to a maximum amount of \$500,000.

Farm Service Agency will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability.

Other FSA programs that can provide assistance, but do not require a disaster declaration, include the [Emergency Conservation Program](#); [Livestock Forage Disaster Program](#); [Livestock Indemnity Program](#); [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program](#); and the [Tree Assistance Program](#).

Interested farmers may contact their [FSA County Office](#) for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs. Additional information is also available online at <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>.

## Livestock Forage Losses

Kauai, Maui and Hawaii county ranchers are now eligible to apply for 2016 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) benefits.

The Livestock Forage Program provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who suffer grazing losses for covered livestock due to drought on privately owned or cash leased land. Eligible livestock producers must complete a CCC-853 and submit the required supporting documentation to the Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Office no later than January 30, 2017 for 2016 losses.

Additional information about LFP, including eligible livestock, is available at the local [FSA County Office](#) or online at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).



## FSA Unveils Monthly Webinar Series

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) will host a series of webinars each month to inform producers about FSA programs and initiatives. To register the webinars, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/outreach](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/outreach) and click on “Outreach Webinars.”

## Climate Smart Agriculture & Forestry

In April 2015, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a comprehensive and detailed approach to support farmers, ranchers, and forest land owners in their response to address the causes of climate change. The resulting framework consists of 10 building blocks that span a range of technologies and practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase carbon storage and generate clean renewable energy through mitigation.

The Department’s strategy focuses on climate-smart practices designed for working production systems that provide multiple economic and environmental benefits in addition to supporting resilience to extreme weather, reduced emissions and increased carbon storage.

Through a comprehensive set of voluntary programs and initiatives spanning its programs, USDA expects to reduce net emissions and enhance carbon sequestration by over 120 million metric tons of CO2 equivalent per year – about 2% of economy-wide net greenhouse emissions – by 2025. That is the equivalent of taking 25 million cars off the road, or offsetting the emissions produced by powering nearly 11 million homes last year.

For more information on the Building Blocks for Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry click the following link: <http://www.usda.gov/documents/climate-smart-fact-sheet.pdf>. For additional information on ways to consider greenhouse gases when managing land, refer to the USDA Climate Hub webpage: <http://www.climatehubs.oce.usda.gov/>.



- Understanding Receipt for Service - July 19 at 8:00 am (Hawaii) and 7:00 am (American Samoa). With the goal of ensuring all FSA customers and potential customers are properly served in local offices, the 2014 Farm Bill requires that a receipt be provided. Learn more about Receipt for Service; how it affects you; and what you can expect when you visit a FSA County Office.
- Need Crop Storage? The Farm Storage Facility Loan Can Help - August 9 at 8:00 am (Hawaii) and 7:00 am (American Samoa). The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program provides low-interest financing so producers can build or upgrade permanent or portable facilities to store crops. Learn how this program may be able to help your operation.

Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in these webinars should contact Tanya Brown at 202-690-1700 or Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339 at least three business days prior to the webinar.

For producers in Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or for others who miss the scheduled dates, the webinars will be recorded for future viewing and can be accessed at [www.fsa.usda.gov/](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/)

### Dates to Remember

July 15, 2016	Deadline to file a crop certification report for banana, papaya and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
August 1, 2016	Deadline for nominations to be received in the FSA County Office for FSA County Committee elections
December 13, 2016	Deadline for Hawaii County producers to apply for Emergency Loans due to impacts of drought
December 20, 2016	Deadline for Maui County producers to apply for Emergency Loans due to impacts of drought
January 11, 2017	Deadline for Kauai County producers to apply for Emergency Loans due to impacts of drought

## Payments Set for Geographically Disadvantaged Agricultural Producers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced payments will be issued for agricultural producers enrolled in the Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment Program (RTCP) for fiscal year 2015. The Department will provide \$1.9 million nationally to help offset transportation costs for geographically disadvantaged producers.

This program helps farmers and ranchers outside the 48 contiguous states who are at a competitive disadvantage when transporting products to market.

The 2014 Farm Bill reauthorized the program, which allows farmers and ranchers in Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Republic of Palau. Other non-contiguous areas eligible to recover transportation costs include Alaska, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Payments are calculated based on the costs incurred for transportation of the agricultural commodity or inputs, subject to an \$8,000 limit per producer per federal fiscal year. The payments for those who signed up for RTCP 2015 will go out later this month. Because total claims exceeded available funds, payments to recipients will be reduced by 0.6621465 percent.

Enrollment for fiscal year 2016 will begin on July 18, 2016 and end on September 9, 2016 and must be completed through the Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Office. Applicants will have until November 2, 2016, to provide supporting documentation. Payments for fiscal year 2016 will be made once all supporting documentation has been reviewed and approved.

For more information on RTCP, farmers and ranchers in the eligible areas can visit their [FSA County Office](#) or the FSA website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport).



### ***Eat Fresh - Buy Local!!***

*Eat Fresh—Buy Local!!* was recently scripted in washable paint on the window of the Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Office in Pago Pago, American Samoa. Program staff Letisha Gaoa, Josephine Lealasola and Joe Uiagalelei came up with the dramatic visual to attract and welcome new producers into the office to learn about FSA's programs. Of course promoting locally grown produce helps new and long-time producers.

### **Start a Retirement Savings**

The U.S. Department of the Treasury's *myRA* can help you get on the path to retirement saving. It costs nothing to open an account and there are no fees. Visit [myRA.gov](http://myRA.gov) to get started.

### **Interest Rates for June 2016**

Farm Operating Loans	2.25 %
Microloans	2.25 %
Farm Ownership Loans	3.50 %
Farm Ownership Loans Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50 %
Emergency Loans	3.25 %

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