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Farm Service Agency Electronic News Service

NEWSLETTER

GovDelivery

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Table of Contents

- [Signup for Market Facilitation Program closes December 6](#)
- [USDA Encourages Producers to Consider NAP Risk Protection Coverage Before Crop Sales Deadlines](#)
- [FSA Encourages Farmers and Ranchers to Vote in County Committee Elections](#)
- [New Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their Operation](#)
- [Emergency Disaster Declarations and Designations](#)
- [November 2019 Interest Rates](#)
- [Dates to Remember](#)
- [FSA Hawaii & Pacific Basin State Committee](#)
- [Sign Up Today for Text Alerts from FSA](#)

Hawaii & Pacific Basin FSA State Office

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300 Ala Moana Blvd, Rm 5-108
Honolulu, HI 96850

Signup for Market Facilitation Program closes December 6

Enrollment Open through Dec. 6

Signup is ongoing for the Market Facilitation Program (MFP), a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) program to assist farmers who continue to suffer from damages because of unjustified trade retaliation from foreign nations. Through MFP, USDA will provide up to \$14.5 billion in direct payments to impacted producers, part of

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State Executive Director:
AL Frenzel

Chief Program Specialist:
Patrick Lewis

Chief, Farm Loan Program:
Theresa Correa

**Upcoming County
Committee Meetings:**

Hawaii County Committee
January 10, 2020 at 8:30 am

Honolulu County Committee
November 15, 2019 at 3:00
pm

Maui County Committee
November 21, 2019 at 8:30
am

Kauai County Committee
November 20, 2019 at 9:00
am

Guam County Committee
December 12, 2019 at 9:00
am

CNMI County Committee
December 12, 2019 at 11:00
am

Contact the County Office to
confirm meeting date and
time, as budget constraints
may limit the County
Committee's ability to meet
each month.

[Click here for a list of County
Offices, contact numbers and
addresses.](#)

**Website for Hawaii and
Pacific Basin FSA:**

a broader trade relief package announced in late July. The sign-up period runs through Dec. 6, 2019.

MFP payments will be made to producers of certain non-specialty and specialty crops as well as dairy and hog producers.

Non-Specialty Crops

MFP payments will be made to producers of alfalfa hay, barley, canola, corn, crambe, dried beans, dry peas, extra-long staple cotton, flaxseed, lentils, long grain and medium grain rice, millet, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, rapeseed, rye, safflower, sesame seed, small and large chickpeas, sorghum, soybeans, sunflower seed, temperate japonica rice, triticale, upland cotton, and wheat.

MFP assistance for 2019 crops is based on a single county payment rate multiplied by a farm's total plantings to the MFP-eligible crops in aggregate in 2019. Those per acre payments are not dependent on which of those crops are planted in 2019. A producer's total payment-eligible plantings cannot exceed total 2018 plantings. [View payment rates by county.](#)

Dairy and Hogs

Dairy producers who were in business as of June 1, 2019, will receive a per hundredweight payment on production history, and hog producers will receive a payment based on the number of live hogs owned on a day selected by the producer between April 1 and May 15, 2019.

Specialty Crops

MFP payments will also be made to producers of almonds, cranberries, cultivated ginseng, fresh grapes, fresh sweet cherries, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pistachios, and walnuts. Each specialty crop will receive a payment based on 2019 acres of fruit or nut bearing plants, or in the case of ginseng, based on harvested acres in 2019.

More Information

Payments will be made in up to three tranches, with the second and third tranches evaluated as market conditions and trade opportunities dictate. If conditions warrant, the second and third tranches will be made in November and early January.

MFP payments are limited to a combined \$250,000 for non-specialty crops per person or legal entity. MFP payments are also limited to a combined \$250,000 for dairy and hog producers and a combined \$250,000 for specialty crop producers. However, no applicant can receive more than \$500,000. Eligible applicants must also have an average adjusted gross income (AGI) for tax years 2015, 2016, and 2017 of less than \$900,000, or 75 percent of the

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person's or legal entity's average AGI for those tax years must have been derived from farming and ranching. Applicants must also comply with the provisions of the Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation regulations.

More information can be found on farmers.gov/mfp, including payment information and a program application.

USDA Encourages Producers to Consider NAP Risk Protection Coverage Before Crop Sales Deadlines

The Farm Service Agency encourages producers to examine available USDA crop risk protection options, including federal crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, before the applicable crop sales deadline.

Producers are reminded that crops not covered by insurance may be eligible for NAP. Beginning, underserved and limited resource farmers are now eligible for free catastrophic level coverage.

Federal crop insurance covers crop losses from natural adversities such as drought, hail and excessive moisture. NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

Producers can determine if crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP by visiting <https://webapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/ActuarialInformationBrowser2018/CropCriteria.aspx>.

The 2018 Farm Bill reinstates higher levels of coverage, from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Producers of organics and crops marketed directly to consumers also may exercise the "buy-up" option to obtain NAP coverage of 100 percent of the average market price at the coverage levels of between 50 and 65 percent of expected production. NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production.

For all coverage levels, the NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties.

Deadlines for coverage vary by state and crop. To learn more about NAP visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap or contact your local USDA Service Center. To find your local USDA Service Centers go to <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Federal crop insurance coverage is sold and delivered solely through private insurance agents. Agent lists are available at all USDA Service Centers or at USDA's online Agent Locator: <http://prodwebnlb.rma.usda.gov/apps/AgentLocator/#>. Producers can use the USDA Cost Estimator, <https://ewebapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/costestimator/Default.aspx>, to predict insurance premium costs.

FSA Encourages Farmers and Ranchers to Vote in County Committee Elections

The 2019 Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections began on Nov. 4, when ballots were mailed to eligible voters. The deadline to return the ballots to local FSA offices, or to be postmarked, is Dec. 2, 2019.

County committee members are an important component of the operations of FSA and provide a link between the agricultural community and USDA. Farmers and ranchers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity price support programs; conservation programs; incentive indemnity and disaster programs for some commodities; emergency programs and eligibility. FSA committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm, may also be eligible to vote.

Eligible voters in the designated local administrative areas below, who do not receive a ballot can obtain one from their local USDA Service Center.

Newly elected committee members will take office Jan. 1, 2020.

The candidates in this year's election are:

Kauai County

Lincoln Y. T. Ching is nominated in LAA 2, Kauai County, to serve as a committee member for a 3-year term. Ching resides in Kapaa and has been a rancher for over 40 years.

Ching is a retired employee for the State of Hawaii, University of Hawaii as a Cooperative Extension Agent for the livestock industry. Ching was the Treasurer for the East Kauai Soil and Water Conservation District and a retired Treasurer for the Kauai Cattlemen's Association.

Honolulu County

Verna Eguires is nominated in LAA 1, Honolulu County, to serve as a committee member for a 3-year term. Eguires is a livestock rancher in Kahuku and has been actively involved in supporting 4H youth development for many years.

Thoune Hongphao is nominated in LAA 2, Honolulu County, to serve as a committee member for a 3-year term. Hongphao is a truck crop farmer in Kunia with a fruit/vegetable stall at the Kapiolani Community College Farmers Market.

Jamie Barton is nominated in LAA 3, Honolulu County, to serve as a committee member for a 3-year term. Barton is an agronomist and GoFarm graduate starting a fruit tree orchard on her farm in Waialua.

Hawaii County

Minh Voss is nominated in LAA 3, Hawaii County, to serve as a committee member for a 3-year term. Voss resides in Hilo and has produced a diversification of crops but mainly ginger/turmeric for over 20 years.

She has served as alternate member for the Farm Service Agency for the past 10 years.

Roger Uchima is nominated in LAA 3, Hawaii County, to serve as a committee member for a 3-year term. Uchima resides in Honomu and has raised cattle for the past 13 years. He is owner and operator of a heavy equipment business.

Maui County

Debra Kelly is nominated in LAA 3, Maui County, to serve as committee member. Mrs. Kelly resides in Hoolehua and has been the owner and operator of a goat and cattle operation for more than 30 years and is the current FSA Maui County Committee member representing Molokai and Lanai. She also works as a planner for the Molokai-Lanai Soil and Water Conservation District.

Guam County

Ramon B. Camacho is nominated in LAA 2-2, Saipan County, to serve as a committee member for a 3-year term. Camacho resides in Koblerville and has produced variety of tropical fruits and vegetables for more than 20 years.

Camacho is an active member of Saipan Garapan Public Market and is the Chairperson for the Saipan Parole Board.

Dr. L. Robert Barber is nominated in LAA 1-2, Guam County, to serve as a committee member for a 3-year term. Dr. Barber resides in Mangilao and has produced Tropical Fruit, herbs, and vegetables.

Dr. Barber is an Agricultural Economist for the University of Guam's College of Natural and Applied Sciences and an advisor to the Farmers Cooperative Association of Guam. Dr. Barber is an advocate for small acreage farm production with an emphasis on sustainability and import substitution.

More information on county committees, such as the new 2019 fact sheet, can be found on the FSA website at fsa.usda.gov/elections or at a local USDA Service Center.

New Farmers.gov Feature Helps Producers Find Farm Loans that Fit Their Operation

A new online tool can help farmers and ranchers find information on U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) farm loans that may best fit their operations. USDA has launched the new *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* as the newest feature on farmers.gov, the Department's self-service website for farmers.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers a variety of loan options to help farmers finance their operations. From buying land to financing the purchase of equipment, FSA loans can help. Compared to this time last year, FSA has seen an 18 percent increase in the amount it has obligated for direct farm ownership loans, and through the 2018 Farm Bill, has [increased the limits](#) for several loan products.

USDA conducted field research in eight states, gathering input from farmers and FSA farm loan staff to better understand their needs and challenges.

How the Tool Works

Farmers who are looking for financing options to operate a farm or buy land can answer a few simple questions about what they are looking to fund and how much money they need to borrow. After submitting their answers, farmers will be provided information on farm loans that best fit their specific needs. The loan application and additional resources also will be provided.

Farmers can download application quick guides that outline what to expect from preparing an application to receiving a loan decision. There are four guides that cover loans to individuals, entities, and youth, as well as information on microloans. The guides include general eligibility requirements and a list of required forms and documentation for each type of loan. These guides can help farmers prepare before their first USDA service center visit with a loan officer.

Farmers can access the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* by visiting farmers.gov/fund and clicking the “Start” button. Follow the prompts and answer five simple questions to receive loan information that is applicable to your agricultural operation. The tool is built to run on any modern browser like Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or the Safari browser, and is fully functional on mobile devices. It does not work in Internet Explorer.

About Farmers.gov

In 2018, USDA unveiled farmers.gov, a dynamic, mobile-friendly public website combined with an authenticated portal where farmers will be able to apply for programs, process transactions, and manage accounts.

The *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* is one of many resources on farmers.gov to help connect farmers to information that can help their operations. Earlier this year, USDA launched the *My Financial Information* feature, which enables farmers to view their loan information, history, payments, and alerts by logging into the website.

USDA is building farmers.gov for farmers, by farmers. In addition to the interactive farm loan features, the site also offers a Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool. Farmers can visit farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool#step-1 to find disaster assistance programs that can help their operation recover from natural disasters.

With feedback from customers and field employees who serve those customers, farmers.gov delivers farmer-focused features through an agile, iterative process to deliver the greatest immediate value to America’s agricultural producers – helping farmers and ranchers do right, and feed everyone.

For more information or to locate your USDA Service Center, visit farmers.gov.

Emergency Disaster Declarations and Designations

Farmers and ranchers know all too well that natural disasters can be a common, and likely a costly, variable to their operation. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has emergency assistance programs to provide assistance when disasters strike, and for some of those programs, a disaster designation may be the eligibility trigger.

FSA administers four types of disaster designations:

USDA Secretarial Disaster Designation

- The designation process can be initiated by individual farmers, local government officials, State governors, State agriculture commissions, tribal councils or the FSA State Executive Director
- This designation is triggered by a 30-percent or greater production loss to at least one crop because of a natural disaster, or at least 1 producer who sustained individual losses because of a natural disaster and is unable to obtain commercial financing to cover those losses
- In 2012, USDA developed a fast-track process for disaster declarations for severe drought. This provides for a nearly automatic designation when, during the growing season, any portion of a county meets the D2 (Severe Drought) drought intensity value for eight consecutive weeks or a higher drought intensity value for any length of time as reported by the U.S. Drought Monitor (<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>)

Administrator's Physical Loss Notification

- This designation is initiated by the FSA State Executive Director.
- The designation is triggered by physical damage and losses because of a natural disaster, including but not limited to dead livestock, collapsed buildings, and destroyed farm structures.

Presidential Designation

- A Presidential major disaster designation and emergency declaration is initiated by the Governor of the impacted state through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
- This designation is triggered by damage and losses caused by a disaster of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capability of the State and local governments.

Quarantine Designation

- This designation is requested of the Secretary of Agriculture by the FSA State Executive Director.
- A quarantine designation is triggered by damage and losses caused by the effects of a plant or animal quarantine approved by the Secretary under the Plant Protection Act or animal quarantine laws.

All four types of designations immediately trigger the availability of low-interest Emergency loans to eligible producers in all primary and contiguous counties. FSA borrowers in these counties who are unable to make their scheduled payments on any debt may be authorized to have certain set asides. Additional disaster assistance requiring a designation may also be provided by new programs in the future.

For more information on FSA disaster programs and disaster designations, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/disaster.

November 2019 Interest Rates

Farm Operating Loans 2.50 %
Farm Operating Microloans 2.50%
Farm Ownership Loans 3.00%
Farm Ownership Microloans 3.00%
Farm Ownership Loans Direct Down Payment for Beginning Farmer or Rancher 1.5%
Emergency Loans 3.50%

Dates to Remember

December 1, 2019 - Deadline to sign up for Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program for fruit and vegetable crops

December 6, 2019 - Deadline to sign up for Market Facilitation Program

FSA Hawaii & Pacific Basin State Committee

Teena Marie Rasmussen, Chairperson
Wilson Kenzo Koike
Glenn Martinez
Boyd J. Ready
Simon Russell

Sign Up Today for Text Alerts from FSA

Subscribers Can Receive Important Program Reminders and Updates

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) farmers and ranchers now can receive notifications from their county office through text messages on their cell phone.

Whether producers are in the field, on a tractor or even on horseback, this service enables FSA customers and stakeholders to receive notifications while on the go. Producers will receive text messages regarding important program deadlines, reporting requirements, outreach events and updates.

Producers can text the **short codes** below to FSANOW (372-669) to subscribe to text message alerts from their respective counties. Standard text messaging rates apply. Contact your wireless carrier for details associated with your particular data plan. Participants may unsubscribe at any time.

Hawaii County : **HPBHawaii**
Honolulu County: **HPBHonolulu**
Kauai County: **HPBKauai**
Maui County: **HPBMaui**

Please contact your [local FSA office](#) if you have questions regarding FSA's email news service or the text message option.

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Honolulu County: **HPBHonolulu**
Kauai County: **HPBKauai**
Maui County: **HPBMaui**

Please contact your [local FSA office](#) if you have questions regarding FSA's email news service or the text message option.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).

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