July 2014

Hawaii & Pacific Basin NEWSLETTER

Your Farm Service Agency Online Monthly Newsletter Covering the Latest Topics

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County Committee Nomination Deadline August 1, 2014

Sign-Up for the Transportation Reimbursement Program Announced

Farmers and ranchers in Hawaii and the Pacific Basin can enroll in the Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment Program (RTCP) beginning July 21, 2014 for fiscal year 2014.

The 2014 Farm Bill reauthorized RTCP, which offsets a portion of the costs of transporting agricultural products over long distances. The program allows farmers and ranchers in Hawaii and insular areas including Guam, American Samoa, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands of the United States to recover transportation costs.

Benefits are calculated based on the costs incurred for transportation of the agricultural commodity or inputs during a fiscal year, subject to a cap of $8,000 per producer per fiscal year. Fiscal year 2013 payments began in May, with claims exceeding the available $1.8 million in funding; therefore, payments to recipients were reduced by 0.6986156 percent.

Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment Program enrollments for fiscal year 2014 will begin July 21, 2014, and end on September 8, 2014. Applicants must submit their application to their county FSA office by September 8, 2014. Applicants will have until November 3, 2014, to provide supporting documentation.

For more information on the RTCP program, farmers and ranchers in the eligible areas can visit their county office or the FSA website.

Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food

The *Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food* (KYF2) initiative is a United States Department of Agriculture effort focused on strengthening local and regional food systems.

In recent years, consumers have shown an increased interest in purchasing locally-produced foods and many farmers and ranchers are following the trend and offering fresh products through local markets.

United States Department of Agriculture has a wide array of programs to stimulate economic development in agricultural communities, foster new opportunities for farmers and ranchers; promote locally and regionally grown and processed foods. Resources are available to cultivate healthy eating habits and educated consumers, expand access to affordable fresh and local food; and develop a connection between food, agriculture, community and the environment.

The KYF2 website helps connect consumers with producers in their community and highlights a wide range of programs that can assist farmers, ranchers, businesses, communities and individuals. To learn more about grants, programs, loans and support that is available, click here.

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Office Hours: Monday—Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm	

Next County Committee Meeting Dates:

Hawaii County - October 10 at 8:30 am

Honolulu County - August 15 at 3:00 pm

Kauai County - August 20 at 8:30 am

Maui County - August 21 at 9:00 am

Guam County - August 13 at 9:00 am

CNMI County - August 13 at 9:00 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. A list of County Offices, contact numbers and addresses may be found at:

http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/hi_cof_staff.pdf

USDA Invites Suggestions for the 2017 Census of Agriculture

The United States Department of Agriculture invites suggestions for the 2017 Census of Agriculture that is conducted once every five years by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). The Census provides detailed data covering nearly every facet of the nation's agriculture down to the county level.

National Agricultural Statistics Service released the complete 2012 Census of Agriculture results on May 2, 2014. The agency is now planning the content for the 2017 Agriculture Census and is accepting input. Any individual or organization may submit suggestions on questionnaire items to add or delete, as well as any other ideas concerning the Census. There will be another opportunity to provide official comment through the Federal Register process in the coming weeks.

Content suggestions for the 2017 Census will be accepted until August 4, 2014. Comments can be submitted online at www.agcensus.usda.gov/Contact_Us/Census_Program_Input_Form/. Written suggestions may be mailed to: Census Content Team, Room 6451, 1400 Independence Ave, SW, Washington, DC 20250.

To learn more and to access the complete 2012 Census of Agriculture results, including State and County Profiles and all the other Census data and tools, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov.

Dates to Remember	
August 1, 2014	County Committee Nomination Deadline
September 8, 2014	Deadline to submit applications for the Reimbursement of Transportation Cost Payment Program (RTCP)
September 15, 2014	Deadline for Maui and Hawaii County producers to submit emergency loan applications for drought
September 17, 2014	Deadline for Hawaii County producers to submit emergency loan applications for heavy rains and flooding
November 3, 2014	Deadline to provide supporting documentation for the Reimbursement of Transportation Cost Payment Program
Continuous	Sign-up for the Hawaii Conservation Reserve Program (Hawaii CREP)

Acreage Reporting Dates

In order to comply with Farm Service Agency (FSA) program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to make an appointment with their County FSA Office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable:

September 30	Aquaculture, Floriculture, Ginseng, Mushrooms, Turfgrass Sod for the ensuing year
December 16	Grazed Forage - 15 days before the onset of grazing
January 2	Honey - for crop year 2015
March 15	Coffee
March 31	All other noninsurable crops covered by Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program not listed in this table. Acreage reporting date is by March 31st of the subsequent crop year.
May 31	Nursery for the ensuing crop year
July 15	Banana, Papaya, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:

- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.
- If the acreage report is for any annual or perennial crop where production continued or could have continued beyond the period covered in the reports, then an additional report of production shall be filed the later of:
    1. Within 30 days of the end of the last countable production for the covered crop
    2. 30 days after the last date on which such production could have been obtained

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact your local County FSA Office.

Hawaii and Maui Counties Eligible for Emergency Loans

Hawaii and Maui Counties were designated as primary disaster areas due to drought conditions using the streamlined Secretarial Disaster Designation process. Under this designation, producers are eligible to apply for low interest emergency loans.

In addition, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) Administrator also approved emergency loan assistance for producers in Hawaii County to replace or restore property damaged or destroyed by the heavy rains and flooding in late December 2013.

Emergency loans help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding and other natural disasters or quarantine restrictions.

Producers affected by drought have until September 15, 2014, to apply for emergency loan assistance, while those affected by the heavy rains have until September 17, 2014 to apply. Farm Service Agency will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. Producers can borrow up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses, to a maximum amount of $500,000.

For more information about emergency loans, please contact your local FSA office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov

Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Farm Service Agency administers this program for the United States Department of Agriculture.

All individuals who are not U.S. citizens, and have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA with 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form (FSA-153) could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

Need Information?

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

Junieva Villarin with her mother Elva Pajarillo and Tinian 4-H Coordinator Lawrence Duponcheel at the 2014 Tinian Agricultural Fair

8 Years and 8 Loans Later

In 2006 on a small island of 39 square miles, 50 miles north of Guam, then ten-year old Junieva Villarin of Tinian purchased two piglets as a pilot project with the assistance of the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Youth Loan program. The Youth Loan program together with the support of community organizations, such as 4-H clubs, FFA, and faith-based organizations is a tool for students to learn about business and entrepreneurship by providing practical experience in agricultural related, income-producing projects.

Eight years and eight loans later Junieva's projects proved to be a success. Farm Service Agency's financing provided her the opportunity to manage income producing projects and save money for college. Today she is a full-time student attending the Northern Marianas College (NMC) in Saipan working on an associate's degree in Criminal Justice. Next, Junieva plans to attend the University of Guam to earn a bachelor's degree in Political Science.

Junieva's interest in agriculture began with her participation in the Tinian 4-H Club. At 4-H, she ran profitable piglet projects. She would purchase at a minimum two piglets and raise them to market size then sell them for special occasions or to the local hotel. Junieva marketed her hogs at a reasonable price to make a profit and save the proceeds for college expenses.

4-H helped Junieva develop management and life skills. As the nation's largest youth development and empowerment organization, 4-H offers students opportunities to engage in hands-on learning activities in the areas of science, healthy living, and food security (See the 4-H website for more information at: http://www.4-h.org). Junieva's 4-H coordinator, Lawerence Duponcheel, also played an important part in her success, as he advised, guided, and counseled her in business planning for the projects she undertook.

"Farm Service Agency's youth loans and 4-H helped me be more responsible and allowed me to meet other people," said Junieva. In addition, "I learned business planning and it provided opportunities for community service. The youth loans gave me a sense of responsibility at a young age."

Junieva's acquired skills and knowledge earned her a plant pathology internship at NMC. She quickly found her studies at College to be useful with her Youth Loan projects learning to supplement pig feed by air layering mango and papaya trees. She also discovered other aspects of livestock production and fruit and vegetable operations and gained vital knowledge about Tinian's natural resources and creating sustainable agriculture for the island.

Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) makes loans to youth to establish and operate agricultural income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is $5000.

Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

- Be a citizen of the United States (which includes commonwealths and territories of the United States) or a legal resident alien
- Be 10 years to 20 years of age
- Comply with FSA's general eligibility requirements
- Be unable to get a loan from other sources
- 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 youth loan applicant, along with providing adequate supervision.

Call your FSA County Office for an appointment and assistance in preparing the application forms.

Make an Appointment with FSA

Save time and call ahead to set an appointment. For local FSA Service Center contact information click here.

Livestock Disaster Assistance Sign-Up

On April 15, 2014, three (3) significant programs relating to livestock disaster assistance opened for producer enrollment. Under the 2014 Farm Bill, these programs were made permanent and retroactive with authority granted to cover losses that occurred on or after October 1, 2011.

To expedite applications, all livestock, honeybee and farm-raised fish producers who experienced losses are encouraged to bring records documenting those losses to their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Office. Producers' records should include all pertinent information relating to the consequences of the natural disaster, including:

- Documentation of the kind and number of livestock that died, supplemented if possible by photographs or video records of ownership and losses;
- Dates of death supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts;
- Costs of transporting livestock to safer grounds or to move animals to new pastures;
- Feed purchases if supplies or grazing pastures were destroyed; and
- Crop records, including seed and fertilizer purchases, planting and production records.

Producers can sign-up for the following livestock disaster assistance programs:

- Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered grazing losses due to drought on privately owned or cash leased land or fire on federally managed land. Producers who suffered eligible grazing losses should submit a completed CCC-853 and supporting documentation to their local FSA County Office by January 30, 2015.
- Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather. Producers who suffered livestock death losses should submit a notice of loss and an application for payment to their local FSA County Office by January 30, 2015.
- Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish that have losses due to disease, adverse weather, or other conditions, such as wildfires. This program addresses losses not covered by LFP or LIP. Producers who suffered eligible losses during 2012 and 2013 program years must submit a notice of loss and application for payment to their local FSA County Office by August 1, 2014. For 2014 program year losses, the notice of loss and an application for payment must be submitted by November 1, 2014.

For more information, producers can review the LFP, LIP and ELAP Fact Sheets on the Farm Bill webpage. Producers are encouraged to make an appointment with their local FSA County Office to apply for these programs.

Guaranteed Loan Eligibility

Changes to FSA regulations have removed Guaranteed Operating Loan term limits. Previous and current guaranteed loan borrowers who were not eligible for further guaranteed loans due to the previous 15 year eligibility term limit may now be eligible for further guaranteed loans through their commercial lender.

County Committee Nominations Deadline

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees is important to farmers and ranchers. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

County committee (COC) members are a critical component of the operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers and ranchers who serve on county committees help with the decisions necessary to administer the programs in their counties, ensuring FSA agricultural programs serve the needs of local producers. County committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws, with county committee members applying their judgment and knowledge to make local decisions.

The COC nomination period runs from June 17, 2014 through August 1, 2014. The nomination form is available at USDA Service Centers and online. For more information contact your local FSA office.

Microloan Program

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) developed the Microloan Program to better serve the unique financial operating needs of beginning, niche and small family farm operations.

Farm Service Agency offers applicants a microloan designed to help farmers with credit needs of $35,000 or less. The loan features a streamlined application process built to fit the needs of new and smaller producers. This loan program will also be useful to specialty crop producers and operators of community supported agriculture (CSA).

Eligible applicants can apply for a maximum amount of $35,000 to pay for initial start-up expenses such as hoop houses, essential tools, irrigation and annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents, marketing, and distribution expenses. As financing needs increase, applicants can apply for a regular operating loan up to the maximum amount of $300,000 or obtain financing from a commercial lender under FSA's Guaranteed Loan Program.

Individuals who are interested in applying for a microloan or would like to discuss other farm loan programs available should contact their local FSA office to set up an appointment with a loan official.

Losses Must Be Filed by August 1, 2014 for 2012 and 2013 Honeybee, Livestock and Farm-Raised Fish Losses

Producers who suffered eligible livestock, honeybee or farm-raised fish losses have until August 1, 2014, to submit a notice of loss and application for payment under the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP). This program provides emergency assistance due to disease, adverse weather, or other conditions, including losses not covered by the Livestock Forage Program and Livestock Indemnity Program. Producers who suffered losses during 2012 and 2013 program years must submit a notice of loss and application for payment to their local Farm Service Agency office by August 1, 2014. For 2014 program year losses, the notice of loss and an application for payment must be submitted by November 1, 2014.

For more information, producers can review the ELAP Fact Sheet on the Farm Bill webpage. Producers are encouraged to make an appointment with their local FSA office to apply for the program.

Average Adjusted Gross Income Compliance Review

The Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) verification and compliance reviews for 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013 are conducted on producers who the Internal Revenue Service indicates may have exceeded the adjusted gross income limitations described in [7 CFR 1400.500]. Based on this review, producers will receive determinations of eligibility or ineligibility.

If the producer is determined to have exceeded the AGI limitation of $500,000 of nonfarm income, $750,000 of farm income, $1 million of conservation program benefits or the $1 million total AGI, then receivables will be established for payments earned directly or indirectly by the producer subject to the applicable limitation. The Farm Service Agency State Office will begin notifying producers selected for review next month. If you have any questions about the review process or determination, please contact the FSA State Office at 808-441-2704 ext 138.

Producers who receive initial debt notification letters may only appeal the amount of the debt to their local FSA office. Adverse determinations become administratively final if not timely appealed and can only be reopened if exceptional circumstances exist that prevented the producer from timely filing the appeal.

Interest Rates for July 2014	
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	2.125%
MicroLoans	2.125%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	3.875%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50%
Emergency Loans	3.125%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years)	2.125%

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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).