



Hawaii & Pacific Basin NEWSLETTER



Your Farm Service Agency Online Monthly Newsletter Covering the Latest Topics

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Maui County Designated Drought Disaster Area

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has designated Maui County as a primary natural disaster area due to losses caused by an ongoing drought that, for purposes of this disaster designation, began January 1, 2012, and continues.

"Assistance at this point and time is critically important for producers in Hawaii, especially in helping them keep their farmland healthy for the remainder of the year," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "President Obama and I realize that during this time of disaster, federal assistance will be needed until conditions improve and farmers strive to recover from their losses."

The May 7, 2012, disaster designation makes all qualified farm operators on the islands of Maui, Molokai and Lanai eligible for low interest emergency loans (EM) from USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses. Farm Service Agency will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability.

The USDA also has other programs available to assist farmers and ranchers, including Federal Crop Insurance; and the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program. Interested farmers may contact their local USDA Service Centers 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>.

Emergency Loan Application Process Begins on Kauai

TJ Nii, Assistant Farm Loan Manager, will be in the Kauai County Farm Service Agency (FSA) Office from June 4 - 8, 2012 to take applications for emergency loans for those Kauai producers affected by the March rain storms and flooding. To make an appointment or for more information on FSA's loan programs, call the Honolulu FSA Office toll free at (888)709-8957, ext. 282.

On April 18, 2012, President Obama declared Kauai County a major disaster area thereby making FSA's emergency loan program available.

Applications will be accepted through December 18, 2012 for those producers who suffered eligible physical or production losses due to the severe storms and flooding in March.



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

NAP Loss Filing

The CCC-576, Notice of Loss, is used to report failed acreage and prevented planting and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. Timely filing a Notice of Loss is required for all crops including grasses. For losses on crops covered by the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and crop insurance, you must file a CCC-576, Notice of Loss, in the Farm Service Agency County Office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent.

2011 RTCP Payments

Hawaii and Pacific Basin Farm Service Agency County Offices recently paid 350 farmers and ranchers a total of nearly \$764,000 for the fiscal year 2011 Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment (RTCP) Program for Geographically Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers in Alaska, Hawaii, and Insular Areas.

The payments were prorated by a National factor of 66.85% as the dollar amount of the applications calculated to far more than the 2011 Fiscal Year nation-wide appropriation of \$1.996 million.

Congress has again approved \$1.996 million in funding for the fiscal year 2012 RTCP program. Producers interested in applying for the reimbursement of a portion of the costs to transport agricultural inputs and products are urged to retain their original purchase receipts from October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012. Sign-up for RTCP 2012 begins July 23, 2012 and runs through September 10, 2012.

County Committee Nominations

The County Committee nomination period runs from June 15, 2012 through August 1, 2012. For detailed information contact your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office.



The election of agricultural producers to FSA county committees is important to all 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 U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

County committee 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. They work to ensure Farm Service Agency agricultural programs serve the needs of local producers.

FSA county committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws. County committee members apply their judgment and knowledge to make local decisions.

2010 SURE Sign-Up Deadline

Sign-up for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payment (SURE) program for the 2010 crop year began November 14, 2011, and will end on June 1, 2012. The SURE program provides benefits for farm revenue losses due to natural disasters.

A farm is eligible when either:

- ◆ A portion of the farm is located in a county, or a contiguous county, covered by a qualifying Secretarial disaster declaration;
- ◆ An overall loss greater than 50 percent of the actual production on the farm compared to expected production for the farm for that year.

For producers to be eligible for SURE, they must have obtained a policy or plan of insurance for all crops through either the Federal Crop Insurance Act or Farm Service Agency's Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). Producers must suffer a 10 percent production loss due to a natural disaster to at least one crop of economic significance on their farm in order to be eligible for SURE.

NAP Records

Production records for individual crops need to be filed at the Farm Service Agency (FSA) office to establish an approved Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) yield. If this is the first year of participation in NAP, production and acreage information from prior years may be provided to establish yield. If a producer has participated in NAP in previous years, production and acreage must be reported on a yearly basis to keep the NAP yield up-to-date. Records submitted must be reliable or verifiable. Records also need to show crop disposition. Farm Service Agency recommends producers submit production records as soon as harvest is complete.

All production records must be submitted by the subsequent crop year's final acreage reporting date.

Honoring Veterans - David Wellington, Kauai County

At the helm of Rocking W Ranch, an impressive cattle ranching operation on the island of Kauai, is David R "Duke" Wellington. Over the last 12 years, Mr. Wellington first established and then successfully operated his ranch, no small feat as we all know. With this can-do spirit, it's no surprise that Duke Wellington is one of the brave and distinguished veterans of the United States Armed



David Wellington

Forces. After serving two tours in Korea, the first with the 8th Cavalry at Munsani and the second with the 35th Infantry on Heart Break Ridge, Mr. Wellington used his GI Bill to study Animal Husbandry at Cal Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, California.

"The past twelve years have been a rollercoaster ride, and I can truthfully say that without the support that I have received from the Farm Service Agency Kauai County Office, we would have fallen by the wayside," Mr. Wellington states. "I appreciate the manner in which the county office staff, have always taken the time to explain the various programs and guide us through the application process."

When the Rocking W Ranch was established in 2000 they began participating in USDA programs such as the



Working day at Rocking W Ranch

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). The Rocking W Ranch also experienced drought conditions and received assistance from the Emergency Assistance for Livestock Program, Honeybees and Farm Raised Fish (ELAP). Because of their geographically disadvantaged location and the high cost of shipping, FSA was also able to assist the ranch with the Reimbursement of Transportation Cost Program (RTCP) in 2011. In spite of low cattle prices in the past 3 to 5 years, David Wellington has kept the Rocking W Ranch a viable operation with the assistance of FSA's programs.

USDA Factoid: Did you know?

The Smith-Lever Agricultural Extension Act of 1914 established a cooperative relationship between USDA and land grant colleges to carry findings of agricultural research directly to farmers.



FSA booth at the Hilo Earth Day celebration

FSA Participates in Hilo Earth Day Celebration

Hawaii County Farm Service Agency (FSA) staff took part in the 24th Annual Earth Day Celebration held at Hawaii Community College (HCC) in late April.

Farm Loan Program Technician, Jennifer Balderas (pictured above), along with other Hawaii County FSA staff were on hand to inform the public including commercial farmers and vendors about the Agency's programs, such as the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), Reimbursement of Transportation Cost Program (RTCP) and direct operating and farm ownership loans.

It is estimated that more than a thousand people attended the annual event. One of the highlights was the Hawaiian native plant growers who donated tree seedlings and edible herbs that were distributed free of charge to attendees. The event, which included more than fifty exhibits, was coordinated by the HCC Student Life Council, Student Government and Creative Arts Hawaii.

Adjusted Gross Income

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

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 non-farm average AGI for conservation programs.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Participants in Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) programs subject to average AGI rules must submit form CCC-931 to their local FSA County Office to avoid interruption of program benefits. This form may be obtained from local FSA and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offices.

Farm Loan Programs

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is committed to providing family farmers with loans to meet their farm credit needs. Any producer who is having difficulty obtaining a loan from a commercial lender should contact FSA about direct and guaranteed loans.

Farm ownership or farm operating loans may be obtained as direct loans up to a maximum of \$300,000. Guaranteed loans have a maximum limit of \$1,214,000. There is a one-time fee of 1.5% on the 90 percent guaranteed portion of an FSA loan, but the fee may be included as part of the loan. There is no loan fee for a FSA direct loan.

To find out more about FSA loan programs, contact your county office staff.

Guam Celebrates 150th Anniversary of United States Department of Agriculture



Commemorating the 150th anniversary of the founding of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and 112 years of USDA assistance to the people of Guam, the Governor and Lt. Governor of Guam hosted a morning with local and federal representatives. The May 15th festivities at the Guam Government House included speeches and everyone putting shovels to the soil for the planting of 15 coffee trees. Pictured above are USDA employees, including Tom Camacho, Ilene Quitagua and Fred San Nicholas of the Farm Service Agency.

Conservation Compliance (HEL & Wetland)



Producers participating in Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs must comply with Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation requirements. Highly erodible land (HEL) contains soil which is susceptible to excessive erosion rates. A wetland is land containing 'wet soils' or is saturated by surface or groundwater which supports growth of water tolerant vegetation.

To maintain eligibility for FSA assistance, producers must not:

- ◆ Farm annually tilled crops on highly erodible land without a conservation system;
- ◆ Farm on land which was converted from a wetland after December 23, 1985; and
- ◆ Convert a wetland to farmland.

Technical determinations of highly erodible land and wetland are completed by Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the US Army Corps of Engineers. Participants who violate HEL or wetland conservation compliance provisions are ineligible for FSA benefits for the year(s) in violation. If a producer received program benefits and is later found to be non-compliant, they would be required to refund all payments received and may be assessed liquidated damages.

Producers must notify FSA and update Form AD-1026 if conducting any activity which would affect their compliance with HEL and wetland conservation provisions. These activities include:

- ◆ Acquisition of new farmland with no previous HEL and/or wetland determinations;
- ◆ Removal of fence rows or any practices within the farm's conservation system;
- ◆ Conversion of land to farmland;
- ◆ Changing of crop fields such as combining fields or dividing fields;
- ◆ Installation, removal, or any modification to a drainage system; and
- ◆ Other activity which may alter highly erodible lands or wetlands.

If you have any questions regarding Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation requirements, please contact your local FSA office or download our factsheet on our website www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/Highlyerodibleland_factsheet.pdf.

Education Events in Guam & CNMI

The Guam County Office is providing a series of educational events during the months of May, June, and July. The focus of the events is to better inform producers on Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) of available programs that are offered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Information provided at these events include: FSA Disaster Programs, County Committee Elections, FSA Farm Loan programs, and Price Support programs.

Outreach dates, times and locations are as follows:

May 22	6:00 pm - 7:30 pm	Guam Santa Rita Senior Citizen Center
May 23	6:00 pm - 7:30 pm	Guam Talofofo Senior Citizen Center
May 24	6:00 pm - 7:30 pm	Guam Merizo Senior Citizen Center
May 26	11:00 am - 12:30 pm	Saipan at the Ag Fair Grounds
June 15	11:00 am - 12:30 pm	Rota NMC-CREES, Room A1
July 16	9:00 am - 10:30 am	Tinian NMC-CREES, Room D

For more information on these outreach events please contact the Guam County Office at 671-472-7568 or producers in CNMI may dial 670-234-0896.



Interest Rates for May 2012	
Farm Operating - Direct	1.50%
Farm Ownership - Direct	3.50%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.500%
Emergency	3.75%
Limited Resource	5.000%



USDA 150th Celebration at Ala Wai Elementary

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) celebrated its 150th anniversary on May 15th. To observe the occasion, USDA agencies in Honolulu attended an event at Ala Wai Elementary School. Over 500 students and staff of Ala Wai

Elementary, federal and state political representatives, and USDA employees began the festivity with a special assembly in the cafeteria. Some USDA agencies gave a presentation with fun slide shows to share their work and how it affects the community. The slides provided some familiar photos that the students could relate to.

After the assembly, guests joined the students in the school garden to plant a tomato seedling variety named after President Abraham Lincoln. The seeds were developed by USDA to commemorate President Lincoln's founding of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1862. The seeds were given to the school to germinate into seedlings. Students picked a partner, and then planted the seedlings, giving their partners a lesson in the planting and care of the seedlings.



Dates to Remember	
May 22	FSA Program Educational Event, 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm, Santa Rita Senior Citizen Center, Guam
May 23	FSA Program Educational Event, 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm, Talofofu Senior Citizen Center, Guam
May 24	FSA Program Educational Event, 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm, Merizo Senior Citizen Center, Guam
May 26	FSA Program Educational Event, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm, Saipan Agriculture Fair
May 28	Memorial Day - FSA Offices Closed
June 1	Deadline to file for SURE 2012
June 4 - 8	Emergency loan applications being taken in Kauai County FSA Office
June 7	Risk Management School - King Kamehameha Hotel, Hawaii County
June 9	Risk Management School - Old Pahala Club House, Hawaii County
June 9-10	Maui 4-H Livestock Association 2012 Show & Auction, Oskie Rice Field & Arena on Olinda Road, Makawao, Maui County
June 15	FSA Program Educational Event, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm, Rota NMC-CREES, Room A1
June 15	County Committee nomination period begins
June 19	Drought Workshop, Maui County Civil Defense Emergency Operations Center, Maui County
June 20-21	Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts Conference, Maui County
July 16	FSA Program Educational Event, 9:00 am - 10:30 am, Tinian NMC-CREES, Room D
July 23	2012 RTCP Sign-up begins
Ongoing	Hawaii CREP (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program) Signup

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all of its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call toll-free at (866) 632-9992 (English) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (English Federal-relay) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Federal-relay).