



FARM SERVICE AGENCY

**USDA
GUAM FSA**

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CNMI County Committee

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August 2010

Guam and CNMI FSA News

Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment Program for Geographically Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (RTCP)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's American farmers and ranchers outside the 48 contiguous United States that experience high transportation costs will soon see relief through funding authorized through the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (Farm Bill).

The Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment Program for Geographically Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (RTCP) assists farmers and ranchers in Alaska, Hawaii, and areas including the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, U.S. Virgin Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Republic of Palau who paid to transport either an agricultural commodity or an input used to produce an agricultural commodity.

Sign-up for RTCP will begin on Aug. 2, 2010, and end on Sept. 10, 2010. Applicants must file their RTCP application for benefits at with their local FSA county office no later than Sept. 10, 2010, and applicants also will have until Nov. 1, 2010, to provide supporting documentation of actual costs of transporting agricultural inputs and commodities in fiscal year 2010 to the FSA county office.

COC Nominating Closed, Voting Starts Nov. 5

By now you should be aware that the deadline for FSA county committee nominations has already passed on August 2, 2010.

Voting Begins Nov. 5

Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Nov. 5, and must be returned to

the county office by the close of business on Dec. 6, or postmarked by midnight Dec. 6, 2010.

Agricultural producers of legal voting age can vote if they participate or cooperate in any FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age but supervises and conducts the farming operations on an entire farm can also vote.

No one can 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.

For additional clarification about county committee elections, contact your local county office staff.

FSA Farm Loans

FSA is committed to providing family farmers with loans to meet their farm credit needs. If you are having trouble getting the credit you need for your farm, FSA direct and guaranteed loans are currently available.

Ask your lender about an FSA loan guarantee if you've had a setback and your lender is reluctant to extend or renew your loan.

Farm ownership loans or farm operating loans may be obtained as direct loans for a maximum of up to \$300,000. Producers are encouraged not to wait until the last minute to apply.

FSA staff will help you complete the application forms and help you understand what information is required and where to find it. Call your county office staff today.



NAP Deadline for Value-Loss Crops

The deadline is September 1, 2010 for the Non-Insured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage on 2010 Value-Loss Crops (Aquaculture, Turfgrass, Floriculture, etc.).

The NAP program is designed to cover losses due to damaging named tropical storms and typhoons. The program covers loss of value in excess of 50 percent of the total value. The administrative fee per policy is \$250 per crop, per producer with a \$750 cap per county. NAP coverage does not begin until 30 days after your application is filed and the administrative fee has been paid. The administrative fee is non-refundable.

Seeking Farmers, Ranchers, and Forestland Owners for NRCS Conservation Programs

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff are available to support private landowners (and lease holders) meet the growing demand for fresh and safe locally grown food, meat, and fiber. NRCS provides natural resources technical assistance under the USDA 2008 Farm Bill.

The Conservation Technical Assistance Program (CTA) is a voluntary program that helps landowner's access NRCS resource management and ecosystem planning services. The intent of CTA is to meet individual, group and community needs for sustainable and economically viable crop, livestock and habitat enhancement improvements to their land.

NRCS technical assistance is based on the voluntary development of a conservation plan or a resource assessment. This in-depth resource assessment builds on the individual landowner's economic and ecosystem objectives. NRCS works with the landowner to develop a plan that will lead to a sustainable and productive farm or ranch. The goal is to establish productive operations that will contribute to a healthy bottom-line, as well as a healthy community and watershed.



NRCS for over 75 years has supported the CTA program across the nation. NRCS has been active in the Micronesia region for the past 35 years. NRCS has field staff in Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (Saipan), the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, and works with national government counterparts in the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

The NRCS CTA program is a first step to accessing USDA Financial Assistance available through other NRCS conservation programs. These programs provide payments to the owner/operator of the land to implement the conservation plan.

Farm Safety

Your Guam FSA staff wants to be sure our customers are **SAFETY CONSCIOUS**.

Remember: Walk around machinery and check shields and guards; make sure the PTO's master shield is in place; make sure you have Slow Moving Vehicle signs.

When taking medicine, take it at the appropriate time and eat on schedule.

The American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) offers these tips for farmers:

1. Educate yourself on farm equipment. Follow instructions according to the equipment's manuals about safety.
2. Conduct regular equipment inspections.
3. Install Rollover Protective Structures (ROPS) on tractors.
4. Use seat belts while operating tractors with a ROPS. Do not allow additional passengers on the tractor with you.
5. While operating tractors and other farm equipment, be very cautious on rural roadways.
6. Use protective gear when operating machinery: Be familiar with hazardous chemicals. Take extra precaution when handling chemicals such as anhydrous ammonia, carbon dioxide, methane gas and hydrogen sulfide.
7. Consistently educate your family and co-workers about safety practices, especially children.

Compliance Spot Checks

Compliance spot checks will be conducted on 2010 crops. Instead of locally selecting farms, contracts, deficiency loans and so on for review, a nationwide selection of producers is employed. Spot check selections are to be conducted based on a producer's participation in Conservation Reserve Program, Direct and Counter-cyclical Program, Loan Deficiency Program and others.

For more information about the spot check selection procedure, contact your local Farm Service Agency office.

Foreign Landowner 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 USDA.

Foreign persons who 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 could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property.

County government offices, real estate agents, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

Rural Youth Loans

FSA makes loans to rural youths to establish and operate 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 \$5,000.

Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

- United States citizenship (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien
- 10 years to 20 years of age

- Compliance with FSA's general eligibility requirements
- Reside in a rural area, city or town with a population of 50,000 or fewer people
- Inability 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 project and the loan, along with providing adequate supervision.

Stop by the county office for help preparing and processing the application forms. The FSA Farm Loan staff can help you with questions you may have about a particular program.

Loans for Minorities & Women

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. Loans are available for operating type loans and/or purchase or improve farms or ranches.

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, the FSA has provided targeted funding for women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders.

Producers should contact their local FSA office for details. FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.



Help Available to Stressed Farmers

Recently, the economy, inclement weather, and other factors have hurt some farming operations around the country. These events can push a producer to the emotional breaking point. Watching your livelihood being threatened is difficult for farmers and ranchers, especially for those whose income is solely dependent on agriculture.

The National Suicide Prevention Hotline is available to help. If you know a farmer or rancher who is under stress and is reluctant to ask for help, or if you just need to talk to someone, call 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Your call will be routed to the crisis center nearest you, where trained staffers are available 24/7. This nationwide service is free and confidential. Help is just a phone call away. For more information, go to <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>. This service is not affiliated with the US Department of Agriculture.

Selected Interest Rates for August 2010	
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%
Farm Operating - Direct	2.50%
Farm Ownership - Direct	4.625%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.500%
Emergency	3.750%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 7 Years	2.5%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 10 Years	3.000%
Farm Storage Facility Loan 12 Years	3.375%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.25%

Dates to Remember	
Sept. 1	NAP Sign-up Deadline for Value-Loss Crops
Sept. 10	RTCP Application Deadline
Nov. 5	COC Election Ballots to be Mailed
Dec. 1	NAP Sign-up Deadline for Fruits & Vegetables
Dec. 6	Ballots need to be returned to FSA
Jan 1.	COC Members take office

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all 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, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance programs. (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 USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202)-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."