



# Hawaii & Pacific Basin NEWSLETTER



## Your Farm Service Agency Online Monthly Newsletter Covering the Latest Topics

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### Welcome from the State Executive Director



Aloha, Hafa Adai & Talofa!

Welcome to the first online newsletter of the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) for Hawaii and the Pacific Basin. We hope that you enjoy the ease of accessibility this communication format provides. While being driven by the tightening Federal budget and reduced staff support, it is anticipated that you will find FSA's e-news goes out to you in a much timelier manner and serves your need to know about the latest programs and services offered. You will also receive short reminder notices about program deadlines and other time sensitive information. Best of all, the information contained in the e-newsletters and e-news updates will be available to you 24-7 on your USDA FSA website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/hi](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/hi).

So again, we welcome you and encourage you to spread the word among other farmers and ranchers to sign up today to receive FSA's E-News. Visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/hi](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/hi) to sign up.

Diane L. Ley, State Executive Director

### 2010 RTCP Paid Out \$850,000 2011 Signup Underway

The Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment Program for Geographically Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (RTCP) provides payments intended to offset a portion of the costs of transporting agricultural inputs and products over long distances. The program, authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill, assists farmers and ranchers in Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of

Micronesia (FSM), Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and Alaska.

Benefits under RTCP are calculated based on the amount of costs incurred by the producer for transportation of the agricultural commodity or inputs purchased during a fiscal year, subject to an \$8,000 per producer cap per fiscal year.

Sign-up for fiscal year 2011 RTCP began on July 25, 2011 and will end on September 9, 2011. Applications must be filed with your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) county office. Applicants will have until November 4, 2011 to provide supporting documentation of actual costs for transportation of commodities and/or agricultural inputs in fiscal year 2011 (October 1, 2010 - September 30, 2011) to your FSA county office.

Applicants from the FSM, Palau, and the Marshall Islands shall file their applications through the Hawaii State FSA Office in Honolulu. Application and other documents required may be obtained by calling toll free: 1-866-794-1079. Applicants may submit completed program documents during the announced sign-up period to the following address:

Hawaii State and Pacific Basin  
Farm Service Agency Office  
737 Bishop Street, Suite 2340  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Fiscal year 2010 payments to geographically disadvantaged farmers and ranchers approved for RTCP benefits began on July 20, 2011.

For more information on the RTCP program, visit your local FSA county office or [www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport).



## FSA Farm Loans

The Farm Service Agency (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, or regularly borrow from FSA, direct and guaranteed loans are currently available.

Ask your lender about an FSA Guaranteed Loan if you have 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. Guaranteed Loans can reach a maximum indebtedness of \$1,119,000. Producers are encouraged to apply early so that a loan can be processed and funded in a timely manner.

Farm Service Agency employees will help you complete the necessary application and other forms, and help you understand what information is required, where to find it, or who to contact to get it. To find out more about FSA loan programs, contact your county office staff.



### Loans for Women and Minorities

The Farm Service Agency (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 to purchase or improve farms or ranches.

While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, FSA has provided targeted funding for women and minorities. Eligible minority groups include American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Asians, Blacks or African Americans, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, and women.

If producers or their spouses believe they would qualify for these targeted funds, they should contact their local FSA office for details. FSA applicants must meet all loan eligibility and feasibility requirements.

## Interest Rates for August 2011

<b>Farm Operating - Direct</b>	<b>2.125%</b>
<b>Farm Ownership - Direct</b>	<b>4.675%</b>
<b>Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher</b>	<b>1.500%</b>
<b>Emergency</b>	<b>3.750%</b>

## County Committee Elections

In order to ensure that County Committee members are fairly representative of the agricultural producers in a county, each county is divided into three Local Administrative Areas (LAAs). Every year, on a rotational basis, an election is held in one of the LAAs of a county. This year's election process is already underway and the period to accept nominations ended on August 1, 2011. Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters on November 4, 2011. If you receive a ballot, vote for one candidate, sign and return your ballot so it is received no later than December 5, 2011 in your local county FSA office.

A map showing the boundaries of the LAA having an election this year is available in the county office along with a complete list of those who are eligible to vote.

For more information about FSA county committee elections, visit your County FSA Office or check out our website at: [www.fsa.usda.gov/hi](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/hi).

### Candidates by county for this year's election:



**Hawaii County - LAA#1 (Puna and Ka'u Districts)**

Aileen Yeh raises beef cattle on the family ranch in Glenwood. She also owns and operates a plant nursery specializing in hardwoods for forestry, and growing native species for restoration and native plantings.

Luana Beck operates and manages Hooluana Ranch located in Mt. View. She actively participates in many community organizations such as the Hawaii Island Master Gardeners Assn (founding president) and Hilo Farm Bureau.



## NOTICE TO HISPANIC AND/OR WOMEN FARMERS OR RANCHERS COMPENSATION FOR CLAIMS OF DISCRIMINATION

If you believe that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) improperly denied farm loan benefits to you between 1981 and 2000 because you are Hispanic, or because you are female, you may be eligible to apply for compensation.

To register your name to receive a claims packet, call the Farmer and Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429 or visit: [www.farmerclaims.gov](http://www.farmerclaims.gov)

The claims package will have detailed information about the eligibility and claims process.



USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



**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 Waianuenue 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 infor-  
mation

**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

**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—4:30 pm

**Website**  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/hi](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/hi)

**Maui County - LAA #2** (south and southwest of Kuihelani, Hana, and Haleakala Hwy. from Kula to Kipahulu)

Bryan Otani is the owner and operator of a vegetable farm in Omaopio, Maui and is a current member of the Maui County Committee representing LAA #2.

**Honolulu County - LAA #2** (windward side from north end of Waimanalo to Kahuku)

Gail Thongkham is the current minority advisor to the Honolulu County FSA Committee and is of Lao descent. She and her family have been farming for over 10 years growing a variety of Southeast Asian vegetables.

**Kauai County - LAA #1** (Niihau, Waimea, Koloa, and up to Lihue - tax map key districts (4)-1's, (4)-2's and (4)-3's)

Michael C. "Corky" Bryan has been ranching in the Lihue area for the past 2 years and in Hawaii for the past 46 years. He is on the Board of Directors of the Hawaii Cattlemen's Association and is a 2007 Inductee to the Paniolo Hall of Fame.

Sheila Louis has ranched in the Hanapepe area for the past 18 years. She is a member of the Hawaii State Cattlemen's Council Marketing Committee and a member of the Paniolo Hall of Fame State Committee.

Charlene A. Mederios has lived and ranched in Lawai for the past 32 years. She is involved in 4H County activities, is a member of the Hawaii High School Rodeo State Board and President of the Kauai Keiki Rodeo Association.

Gary Ueunten resides in Lawai and is the owner and operator of a tropical fruit and vegetable farm. He is a member of the Kauai County Farm Bureau and an Associate Director for the West Kauai Soil and Water Conservation District.

**Guam - LAA #3** (Yona south of Route 17 to Umatac to Talofoto)

Brian F. Leon Guerrero farms in the Village of Inarajan. He has an aggregate of 120 acres in which he operates and specializes in cucumber, eggplants, and watermelon.



**Commonwealth of the Northern  
Mariana Islands - LAA #3** (Island of Tinian)

Ignacio "Ike" Aquiningoc was born and raised on the Island of Tinian. He operates a 77 acre ranch where he raises hogs and cattle. He practices conservation measures through various USDA programs and is knowledgeable in FSA programs.

## 7,175 Ways to Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food: Visit a Farmers Market



Farmers markets are expanding to communities across the nation at an amazing rate! [There are 7,175 farmers markets listed](#) in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's *2011 National Farmers Market Directory*. That's 7,175 locations you can meet a farmer, get the freshest local producer, meat, dairy, cheese, and other regional delights. That's 7,175 locations where you can invest in your community, meet your neighbors, and support the local and regional food system.

And it is over 1,000 more farmers markets listed in the [USDA Farmers Market Directory](#) since last year. Since 2010, the number of farmers markets listed in the USDA National Farmers Market Directory on the Agricultural Marketing Service website has jumped 17 percent from 6,132.

What do these numbers mean? The growth in farmers markets is a sign that the local and regional food system is robust and thriving. More farmers markets mean more opportunities for small and midsize farmers - especially beginning farmers - to diversify their farms, sell their products and grow their businesses. More farmers markets mean more local economic stimulation to more communities which, in turn, mean more job opportunities. More farmers markets mean more access to fresh, healthy and local food.

Take a moment to look at the [USDA National Farmers Market Directory](#) and find a farmers market near you.



## 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 (FSA) administers this program for USDA.

Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the USA are required to report the transaction to FSA within 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.



### USDA Announces Last Call for Producers to File AGI Forms with the IRS

Producers are reminded that they must submit an Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) verification consent form (CCC-927 or CCC-928) to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as soon as possible in order to maintain eligibility for 2009 and 2010 program benefits.

The consent form authorizes the IRS to verify, for the Farm Service Agency (FSA), whether a payment recipient's AGI meets the eligibility requirements for FSA programs. The form became a requirement for payment eligibility beginning with the 2009 crop year, however many program participants have not yet submitted this form for 2009 and 2010 program benefits.

Producers who fail to file these forms before September 2011 will receive a notice from the National Office stating that the producer is ineligible for 2009 and/or 2010 payments. A producer determined to be ineligible either:

- 1) who has already received 2009 and/or 2010 payments will be responsible for fully refunding all payments received under programs subject to AGI limitations, or
- 2) did not receive 2009 and/or 2010 payments, will be ineligible to receive program payments otherwise due to them.

The IRS requires written consent from all individuals or legal entities before verification of the average AGI can be provided to USDA. Individuals must submit form CCC-927 and legal entities must submit form CCC-928. Without these forms on file, eligible producers will not receive USDA program payments.

These consent forms are required for payments received from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as well as those received through FSA. Completed forms must be returned to the IRS.

For more information on AGI eligibility requirements or the AGI verification process, contact your FSA county office.

Forms may be obtained from your local FSA or NRCS office or online at: <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/mainervlet>

### FSA Loan Officer Customer Service Pays Off for Immigrant Farmer



With a loan from the USDA Farm Service Agency, Hongye Gao bought a new tractor that has helped his farm to flourish. Going above and beyond to assist minority farmers, Thomas Nii, Assistant Farm Loan Manager of the Honolulu County Office recently mentored Chinese immigrant farmer Hongye Gao and his wife Sokha Ith through some earlier credit issues which enabled Gao to secure a loan with FSA for the much needed tractor.



[Click Here for the Full Story](#)



County Happenings	
Aug. 23	Kauai Taro Growers Association Meeting - RTCP information distributed
Aug. 25-28	Kauai County Farm Bureau County Fair
Sept 9-11	Hawaii County - Hawaii Tropical Fruit Growers Conference - Kona
Sept. 15 9 am	Maui Farm Service Agency County Committee Meeting
Sept. 29	Kauai Project Wet Hawaii, 2011 Make a Splash Festival
Sept. 29 - Oct. 2	Maui County Fair

Dates to Remember	
Sept. 1	NAP Signup for Floriculture, Aquaculture, Mushrooms, and Turf Grass Ends
Sept. 9	2011 RTCP Signup Ends
Nov. 4	COC Ballots Mailed to Producers
Dec. 5	Last Day to Return COC Election Ballots to Your County Office