



Hawaii & Pacific Basin NEWSLETTER



Your Farm Service Agency Online Monthly Newsletter Covering the Latest Topics

In this Issue:

Page 1:

- **Hispanic and Women Farmers Claims Process**
- **Rural Youth Loans & Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements**
- **Farm Loan Interest Rates for September**

Page 2:

- **September is National Preparedness Month**
- **2011 LIP and ELAP Sign Up**
- **NAP Loss Filing**
- **Emergency Farm Loans**
- **Emergency Farm Loan Application Deadlines**
- **County Happenings**
- **Important Dates and Program Deadlines to Remember**

Page 3:

- **SURE Disaster Eligibility Requirements for 2011 and 2012 Crops**
- **Immigrant Farmers Reap Harvest of Opportunities**

Page 4:

- **A Note from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack**
- **USDA Employees Tackle Hunger in Our Communities**

Hispanic and Women Farmers

A process to resolve the claims of Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who believe they were discriminated against when seeking USDA farm loans has been established.

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.

For additional information contact:

Hispanic and Women Farmer Claims Process:
www.farmerclaims.gov or call
 1-888-508-4429

Pigford – The Black Farmers Discrimination Litigation:
www.blackfarmercase.com
 or call 1-866-950-5547

Keepseagle - The Native American Farmers Class Action Settlement:
www.IndianFarmClass.com
 or call 1-888-233-5506



Interest Rates for September 2011	
Farm Operating - Direct	2.125%
Farm Ownership - Direct	4.625%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.500%
Emergency	3.750%

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. Loans may not exceed \$5000.



Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements

- United States Citizenship (which includes Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands) or a legal resident alien
- 10 to 20 years of age
- Comply with FSA's general eligibility requirements
- Reside in a rural area, city or town with a population of 50,000 or fewer people
- 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 project and the loan, along with providing adequate supervision.

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

September is National Preparedness Month

Take action now to make sure your family, neighborhood and community are ready for emergencies and disasters of all types:

- ✓ Put together an emergency supply kit
- ✓ Make a family emergency plan
- ✓ Be prepared to help your neighbor
- ✓ Work as a team to keep everyone safe

To learn more about how you can prepare for emergencies visit ready.gov or call 1-800-BE-READY, TTY 1-800-462-7585



County Happenings

Sept. 29	Kauai Project Wet Hawaii, 2011 Make a Splash Festival
Sept. 29 to Oct. 2	Maui County Fair

NAP Loss Filing

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 your FSA County Office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent. The CCC-576 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.

If filing for prevented planting, an acreage report and CCC-576 must be filed within 15 calendar days of the final planting date for the crop.



2011 LIP and ELAP Sign Up

Sign up deadlines are approaching for FSA's Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP). Fact sheets for these programs can be found at www.fsa.usda.gov; click on NEWSROOM, then FACT SHEETS.

Producers who have suffered a disaster due to severe weather conditions should read the fact sheets and visit their local FSA office to get a quick start on the recovery process.

Both LIP and ELAP sign-ups require a Notice of Loss filed by the earliest of either:

30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent to the participant or

October 31, 2011

An application for payment must be received no later than January 30, 2012.

Emergency Loan Application Deadlines

American Samoa	September 26, 2011	Physical losses only, caused by Cyclone Wilma
All Hawaii Counties except Kauai	December 8, 2011	Production and physical losses, caused by tsunami waves

Dates to Remember	
Oct. 1	Kauai added as eligible county for Hawaii CREP sign up
Oct. 31	Last day to file Notice of Loss for LIP and ELAP sign-ups
Nov. 4	RTCP supporting documentation due in County Office
Nov. 4	COC Ballots Mailed to Producers
Dec. 1	Application closing date for fruits and vegetables insurable under NAP for 2012
Dec. 5	Last Day to Return COC Election Ballots to Your County Office

Emergency Farm Loans

The Farm Service Agency provides emergency loans to help producers recover from production losses and physical losses due to drought, flooding, and other natural disasters.

Loan Uses

Emergency loan funds may be used to:

- Restore or replace essential property
- Pay all or part of production costs associated with the disaster year
- Pay essential family living expenses
- Reorganize the farming operation
- Refinance certain debts.

Further information and applications for loan programs are available at your local FSA county office.

**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 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

SURE Disaster Eligibility Requirements for 2011 and 2012 Crops

The legislative authority for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) program ends on September 30, 2011. Producers must meet specific eligibility requirements to receive SURE assistance for disasters that occur on or before September 30, 2011, and affect fall 2011 and 2012 crops.

Producers can apply for a 2011 or 2012 SURE payment if a crop of economic significance located in a primary or contiguous disaster county under a Secretarial Disaster Designation suffered at least a 10 percent loss due to an eligible disaster occurring on or before September 30, 2011.

Crops are not required to be harvested on or before September 30, 2011, to maintain SURE eligibility. A loss claim will only trigger after FSA determines that the loss was a result of a disaster occurring on or before September 30, 2011. Losses that result from disasters that occur after September 30, 2011, will not be eligible for SURE benefits.

Producers with 2011 and 2012 crops that suffer losses caused by disasters that occur on or before September 30, 2011, must also meet the following criteria:

- For insured crops, the insurance policy defines the coverage period as beginning on or before September 30, 2011
- For Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) crops, the coverage period begins on or before September 30, 2011
- The final planting date according to RMA and FSA (NAP crops only) occur on or before September 30, 2011.

The sign-up period for 2011 and 2012 SURE will not begin until after the national average market prices are determined for each respective crop year, which is normally one year after the applicable crop year. For more information about SURE or any other program administered by FSA, please contact your local FSA office or visit the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov.



Immigrant Farmers Reap Harvest of Opportunities



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An immigrant farmer assistance workshop was held at the Hawaii Agricultural Research Center in Kunia on Saturday, August 20, 2011.

Twenty-nine year old Shin Ho, a second-generation farmer and operations manager of Ho Farms in Kahuku, was one of over 70 agricultural producers who attended the four hour Immigrant Farmer Workshop. Those attending represented a wide range of agriculture industries from vegetable and herb crop farming to livestock, plant nursery and aquaculture.

Ho's parents, who emigrated from Laos, started farming in Hawaii 19 years ago. Today, with Shin and her brother Neil at the helm, the farm is considered a model operation turning steady profit with its crops of tomato, cucumber, beans and other vegetables.

"Farmers really have to understand the science of how to grow their crops, know how to get the most value for produce that is perishable and how to fully utilize state and federal resources," Ho said. "We've used crop insurance, USDA farm loans, resource conservation and development grants and other programs to help our farm grow."

Ho family
left to right:
Le Xieng,
Shin, Wei
Chong,
Neil



Jason Shitanishi, FSA County Executive Director for Honolulu County, encouraged the producers, many of whom are embarking on their first farming venture, to think of their operations the same as they would any other formal business enterprise. "Farming is a business, not just a way of life," Shitanishi said. "A lot comes down to being a good business person."

Accurate business records of expenses, income and production need to be kept as these records are necessary when applying for loans, insur-

ance, grants and other programs. Producers need to be able to show their business plan, their production, and other records. Accurate records will aid the farmer in applying for programs and obtaining the help needed to take their farming operation to the next step.

The workshop was a joint outreach project between the University of Hawaii at Manoa, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, the Cooperative Extension Service through its Local Immigrant Farmer Education (LIFE) Program, the Lao Farmers Association of Hawaii, and the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA). The workshop brought 14 agencies together to inform immigrant farmers of the resources and programs available to them.

Jason Shitanishi spoke to the audience members and gave them information on the Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment Program for Geographically Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (RTCP) and other farm programs. T.J. Nii, Loan Officer for FSA provided information on FSA's loan programs.

Other presenters included the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), University of Hawaii, College of Tropical Agriculture, Trust for Public Land, Hawaii Agricultural Foundation (Kunia Ag Park), Oahu Resource conservation and Development and the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation provided information on a wide variety of programs and services.

A Note from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack



Some recent news stories have focused on suspicions and rumors about the Obama administration's work on agriculture. The truth is that the President, EPA Administrator Jackson and I are listening to farmers, ranchers and producers so we can be the best possible partner for successful operations. These efforts are helping farmers enjoy some of the best incomes they have seen in decades.

Sadly, rumors and misconceptions have become the norm, not the exception, especially when it comes to regulations and how they might affect our nation's producers.

First, it was that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was considering treating spilled milk like an oil spill. Not true. And in terms of water regulations, EPA has made it clear that recent rules do not seek to regulate land that occasionally ponds during heavy rains.

Regulation of farm dust is another frequently repeated myth, based on a congressionally-mandated review that the EPA has conducted every 5 years for decades. We all know you can't farm without dust. And EPA has no plans to propose stricter standards.

And the Department of Transportation announced just last week that it has no intention of proposing any new regulations

or rules on the transport of agricultural products, farm machinery, or farm supplies to or from a farm.

Perhaps more importantly, the Obama Administration has worked to be the most accessible and collaborative in history. The President and I are listening to farmers, ranchers and other producers and actively collaborating across the federal government to help everyone understand the facts of American agriculture.

I maintain a regular dialogue with Lisa Jackson at EPA and we even visited farms in Iowa together. The collaborative partnership we enjoy is reflected in our policies: pursuing common-sense standards that will give farmers a seat at the table and let them make the decisions they feel are best for their own operations.

One result of this sort of collaboration is that in 2009 and 2010, the federal government issued fewer new rules than it did in 2007 and 2008.

As you hear from producers about their concerns, I know you will continue to be helpful in providing them with the information they need to help their operations succeed, and not to get caught up in rumor or exaggeration. And you should urge folks with additional questions to contact the EPA directly, where they should be able to get further help in separating fact from fiction.

EPA and USDA understand that if we are going to solve the major environmental challenges of our time – combating climate change, reducing soil erosion, and ensuring an ample supply of clean water and healthy food for our families – farmers must help lead the way.

USDA Employees Tackle Hunger in our Communities



Employees in local USDA Service Centers throughout Hawaii, American Samoa, and Guam contributed nearly 3 1/2 tons (6,503 lbs) of food during the three-month Feds Feed Families Food Drive that completed on August 31st. Their generosity will help to address prevailing "food insecurity" that negatively impacts one in six individuals and one in four children across America. All contributions were distributed through local food banks and service providers.

When you see an employee of Rural Development, Natural Resources Conservation Service or the Farm Service Agency please say - thank you, mahalo, fa'afetai lava, or si yu'us ma'ase!

