



Hawaii & Pacific Basin NEWSLETTER

Your Farm Service Agency Online Monthly Newsletter Covering the Latest Topics

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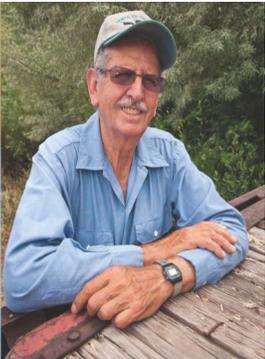
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Hispanic and Women Farmers and Ranchers Claims Process Extended to May 1st

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has announced the extension of the voluntary claims process for Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA in past decades. All claims must now be filed by **May 1, 2013.**

The process offers a voluntary alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or female farmer and rancher who can prove that USDA denied his or her application for loan or loan servicing assistance for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000. As announced in February 2011, the voluntary claims process will make available at least \$1.33 billion for cash awards and tax relief payments, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief. There are no filing fees to participate in the program.

Claimants may register for a claims package by calling the telephone number below Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Time or by downloading the forms from the website.

Website: www.farmerclaims.gov

Phone: 1-888-508-4429

Fax: (855) 626-8343

Email: claims@hwfr.org

Claims Period: Sept. 24, 2012 –May 1, 2013.

Claim packages and other documentation may be mailed to Hispanic and Women Farmers and Ranchers Claims Administrator, PO Box 4540, Portland, OR 97208-4540. Claim packages and

other documentation may also be emailed to claims@hwfr.org. Claimants may also fax claims packages and other documentation to (855) 626-8343. Completed forms and documentation must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. PDT on May 1, 2013.

Acreage Certification



After planting, producers should certify their acreage. Filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs.

Failed acreage must be reported within 15 days of the disaster event and before disposition of the crop. Prevented planting must be reported no later than 15 days after the final planting date.

Acreage reports are required for many Farm Service Agency programs. Acreage reports are due in the county office according to the following dates:

- March 15 - Coffee
- May 31 – Nursery
- July 15 – Banana, Papaya
- September 30 – Aquaculture, Floriculture, Turfgrass Sod, Mushrooms, Ginseng
- December 15 – Grazed Forage
- January 2 - Honey

March 31st is the deadline for acreage reports to be submitted to your local FSA county office for all other crops.

Hawaii State & Pacific Basin Farm Service Agency Offices:

Hawaii State & Pacific Basin FSA 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 (808)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
770 East Sunset Blvd.
Suite 265
Barrigada, GU 96913
Ph: (671)472-7568
Fax: (671)472-7580
CNMI (670)234-0896

American Samoa FSA
Pago Plaza Building Suite 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

Microloans Are Cultivating Big Dreams on a Small Scale



Microloans are helping small, niche and beginning farmers and ranchers meet their goals. The less stringent managerial experience and income verification requirements, along with a simpler loan application makes it easier for producers to apply for up to \$35,000 to pay for a wide variety of expenses such as essential tools and equipment, irrigation, seed, lease rent, fertilizer, utilities, and marketing and processing.

Although the process is streamlined, Farm Service Agency's (FSA) mission is to help individuals establish themselves in financially viable agricultural enterprises and applicants must have a solid proposal and also meet FSA eligibility and loan collateral requirements. Whether you have are just starting to get ideas for an agriculture business or have a well developed plan, the local Farm Loan Officer or Manager will help you think through many details if you make an appointment with them.

Rural Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency makes loans to rural youths to establish and operate income-producing projects in connection with 4-H Clubs, Future Farmers of America (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.

Farm Record Changes

Provide changes to your farm records at the local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office for the current crop year. If you are changing your operation entity type, adding or dropping cropland or farms, or adding entities to your operation, contact the FSA county office to report these changes to your Farm Records.

Land Contract Guarantees

The Land Contract (LC) Guarantee Program is a valuable tool to transfer farm real estate to the next generation of farmers and ranchers. Guarantees will be offered to the owner of a farm who wishes to sell real estate through a land contract to a beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher. The guarantee reduces the financial risk to the seller.

FSA offers two types of guarantees:

- Prompt Payment Guarantee - A guarantee up to the amount of three amortized annual installments plus the cost of any related real estate taxes and insurance.
- Standard Guarantee - A guarantee of 90 percent of the outstanding principal balance under the land contract.

The guarantee period is 10 years and the contract payments must be amortized for a minimum of 20 years. The purchase price of the farm cannot exceed the lesser of \$500,000 or the market value of the property.

For additional information see the [Land Contract Guarantee Program Fact Sheet](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/lc_guarantee_program.pdf) at http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/lc_guarantee_program.pdf



Farm Loan Programs Interest Rates for April 2013

Farm Operating - Direct	1.375%
Farm Ownership - Direct	3.50%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50%
Emergency	2.375%
Limited Resource	5.0%
Microloan	1.250%

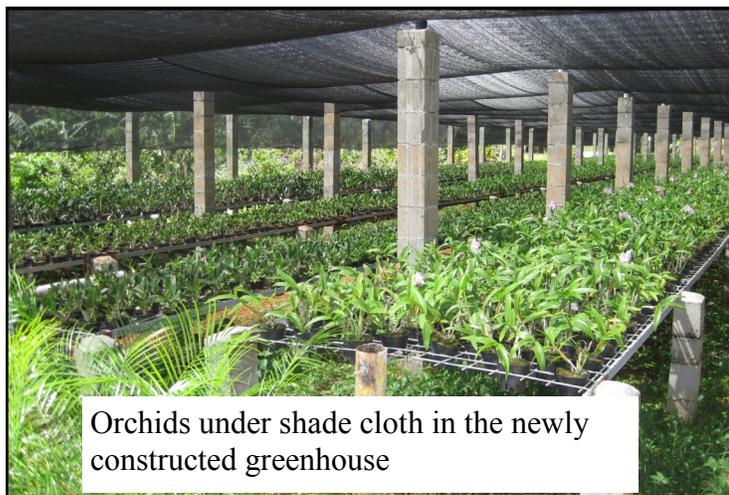
A Passion for Change.. Hooked On Greens

After working in the printing industry for 16 years, Gavino Aguilar, better known as Jun, sold his family business to pursue a passion for all things green. Partnering with his wife, Dorothy, sister-in-law, Perla and husband, Lorenzo Navarro, they established GPF Corporation, formally known as Guam Pacific Farms.

The newly formed GPF's initial focus was to maintain a sustainable commercial poultry and produce operation. However, the avian pandemic, high transportation cost to import feed and tough competition with imported produce, forced a reinvestment in the new business. "Diversifying our operation was the key to survival" Jun said. Thus the GPF operation evolved to become what it is today, a blooming locally owned and family operated ornamental nursery operation. Holding steadfast to their diversification motto, the family manages a successful plant nursery, grounds maintenance, landscaping, cut flowers, plant rental and most recently, hydroponic vegetable operation. Green diversity at its best.



Start of the greenhouse construction.



Orchids under shade cloth in the newly constructed greenhouse

A Partnership Begins

As the operation grew the GPF team took an important step in protecting business assets by seeking assistance from the United States Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). A decision that made good business sense! As their customer base grew, so did the need for expanded inventory to meet demand. Guam Pacific Farms relied heavily on plants imported from off-island so when FSA offered the Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment Program (RTCP) for Geographically Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers GPF eagerly jumped on the bandwagon. By doing so, it allowed for importation of additional nursery stock by stretching their purchasing dollars.

Guam Pacific Farm's long-time participation in FSA Farm Programs naturally sparked interest in their seeking other financial assistance opportunities through the FSA Farm Loan Programs. With his previous business experience, Jun knew that applying for commercial credit was a tedious task. However, Jun indicated that, "applying for a loan with FSA was a walk in the park because the Loan Program staff were there every step of the way."

Equipped with a new greenhouse, delivery van, and revitalized mother-stock plants, GPF is well on its way to being a fully self-sustaining local business. According to Jun, nothing would be more gratifying than passing the torch from his generation to the next. A vision that was set into motion; his daughters are currently immersing themselves in the different facets of the business. Hannah is responsible for the financial segment, whereas Naomi will gradually progress to managing the day to day nursery operations. Handing over this legacy, which is a flourishing business and a stable source of income, is a father's greatest feat.



GPF Corp President Jun Aguilar with Daughter Hannah posing with the hydroponic vegetables.

Farm Safety

According to the National Safety Council, farming is one of America's most hazardous jobs. Take a look around any farm and you will see many different types of equipment. The mechanical aspects of any equipment presents a real danger. Moving parts can grab people or clothing.

These hazards, along with pinch points and missing shields, are dangerous enough for adults; not to mention children. It is always advisable to keep children a safe distance from operating farm equipment. Always use extra caution when backing up, maneuvering or using farm machinery. Ensure everyone is visibly clear and accounted for before machinery is engaged.

The pesticides and chemicals that are used on farms can be extremely dangerous. These materials should be kept locked away in marked containers with warning labels. Use caution when using these chemicals. In the event that someone is exposed to dangerous chemicals, call your local poison control center or the toll-free poison control number at 800-222-1222.



Hawaii Agricultural Mediation Program

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has certified the Hawaii Agricultural Mediation Program (HIAMP) to provide mediation services to the agricultural community in the state of Hawaii. The program is intended to assist agricultural producers, their lenders and other persons directly affected by the actions of the USDA in resolving disputes. Through the mediation process, a trained, impartial person (mediator) helps participants review their conflicts, identify options and agree on solutions.

Mediation is a voluntary and confidential alternative to the traditional legal and regulatory process, and it is offered as part of the Department's informal appeals process; however, mediation must be requested before an appeal hearing is held with the USDA National Appeals Division. It is not intended to override or supersede any existing federal regulation or procedures. Services under HIAMP are made available free of charge for USDA related cases.

For more information visit: www.hiamp.org.

Dates to Remember

April 26-27, 2013	33 rd Big Island Association of Nurserymen (BIAN) Annual Plant Sale, Hawaii County FSA Information Booth
May 1, 2013	Hispanic Women Farmer and Rancher (HWFR) claims deadline
May 9, 2013	Agriculture Awareness Day, Kauai County FSA Information Booth
May 20, 2013	Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) General Signup starts
May 27, 2013	Deadline to apply for emergency loans due to drought in Kauai County
May 31, 2013	Deadline for acreage reports for 2013 Nursery
June 7, 2013	2011 SURE application deadline
June 14, 2013	General Signup for Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) ends
September 9, 2013	Deadline to apply for emergency loans due to drought in Hawaii and Maui Counties

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: 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).