



Hawaii & Pacific Basin NEWSLETTER

April 2016



Your Farm Service Agency Online Monthly Newsletter Covering the Latest Topics

In this Issue:

Page 1:

Cyclone Amos Sweeps American Samoa

Hawaii & Maui Counties Designated Natural Disaster Areas

Page 2:

Farmers to Receive Documentation of USDA Services

Receipt for Services Delivered by E-Mail

Loan Servicing

Interest Rates for April 2016

Page 3:

Top 10 Imported Commodities

Page 4:

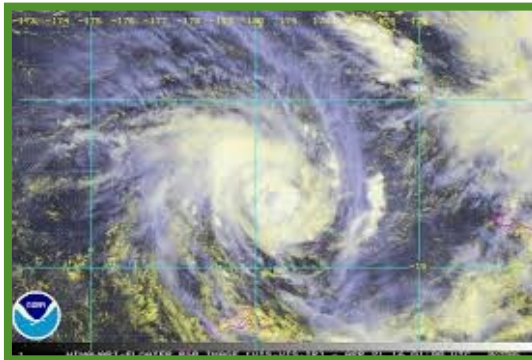
Farm Loan Graduation Reminder

Reporting Organic Crops

Dates to Remember



Click - **USDA Results** to learn about results of your USDA



NOAA image

Cyclone Amos Sweeps American Samoa

Already saturated by recent rain events, American Samoa farmers' operations have been further strained by rain and winds brought on by Tropical Cyclone Amos on April 23, 2016.

In the first few days following the storm, banana and taro producers reported losses to the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and other producers are likely to follow.

Timely filing a *Notice of Loss* with FSA is required for all crops including grasses. For losses on crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), the producer must file a CCC-576, *Notice of Loss*, in the FSA County Office within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent.

Producers of hand-harvested crops must notify FSA of damage or loss within 72 hours of the date of damage or loss first becomes apparent. This notification can be provided by filing a CCC-576, email, fax or phone. Producers who notify the County Office by any method other than by filing the CCC-576 are still required to file a CCC-576, *Notice of Loss*, within the required 15 calendar days.

Hawaii & Maui Designated Natural Disaster Areas

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) designated Hawaii and Maui counties as primary natural disaster areas due to damages and losses caused by the recent drought.

“Our hearts go out to those Hawaii farmers and ranchers affected by the recent natural disaster,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “President Obama and I are committed to ensuring that agriculture remains a bright spot in our nation’s economy by sustaining the successes of America’s farmers, ranchers, and rural communities through these difficult times. We’re also telling Hawaii producers that USDA stands with you and your communities when severe weather and natural disasters threaten to disrupt your livelihood.”

The natural disaster designations for Hawaii and Maui made respectively on April 13 and 20, 2016 will allow all qualified farm operators on Hawaii, Maui, Molokai and Lanai to be eligible for low interest emergency (EM) loans, provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers will 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.

Farm Service Agency has a variety of programs, in addition to the EM loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity. To learn more visit: www.fsa.usda.gov.

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Office Hours: Monday—Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm	
<p>Next County Committee Meeting Dates:</p> <p><u>Hawaii County</u> - July 15, 2016 9:00 am</p> <p><u>Honolulu County</u> - May 27, 2016 3:00 pm</p> <p><u>Kauai County</u> - May 17, 2016 9:00 am</p> <p><u>Maui County</u> - May 19, 2016 8:30 am</p> <p><u>Guam County</u> - August 10, 2016 9:00 am</p> <p><u>CNMI County</u> - August 10, 2016 9:00 am</p> <p>Contact the County Office to confirm meeting date and time, as budget constraints may limit the County Committee's ability to meet each month. A list of County Offices, contact numbers and addresses may be found at:</p> <p>http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/hi_cof_staff.pdf</p>	

Farmers to Receive Documentation of USDA Services

Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds agricultural producers that FSA provides a receipt to customers who request or receive assistance or information on FSA programs.

As part of FSA's mission to provide enhanced customer service, producers who visit FSA will receive documentation of services requested and provided. From December through June, FSA issued more than 327,000 electronic receipts.

The 2014 Farm Bill requires a receipt to be issued for any agricultural program assistance requested from FSA, the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Rural Development (RD). Receipts include the date, summary of the visit and any agricultural information, program and/or loan assistance provided to an individual or entity.

In some cases, a form or document – such as a completed and signed program enrollment form serve as the customer receipt instead of a printed or electronic receipt. A service is any information, program or loan assistance provided whether through a visit, email, fax or letter.

Receipt for Service Delivered by E-Mail

Did you know that an FSA Receipt for Service can be delivered directly to your email address? Ask at your FSA County Office and then watch for a message from: ftc.usda.gov with a .html link.

Loan Servicing

There are options for Farm Service Agency (FSA) loan customers during times of financial stress. Borrowers who are unable to make payments on a loan may contact their local [FSA Farm Loan Manager](#) to learn about options.

Interest Rates for May 2016

Farm Operating Loans	2.375 %
MicroLoans	2.375 %
Farm Ownership Loans	3.5 %
Farm Ownership Loans Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50 %
Emergency Loans	3.375 %



TOP 10 IMPORTED COMMODITIES BY WEIGHT

January 2016

This data was compiled by HDOA Research Statisticians tracking and analyzing imported commodities from air freight and cargo shipping manifests. This data can be used to help farmers fill gaps in Hawaii's local food markets and encourage residents to buy locally grown produce. Please note that import weights were collected from the shipping manifests and do not capture all the imports, however, the rankings are accurate, based on weights that were reliable.



1. ORANGES
2. ONIONS
3. POTATOES
4. CARROTS
5. MELONS
6. LETTUCE
7. APPLES
8. GRAPES
9. PEPPERS
10. TOMATOES

HDOA/NASS HAWAII

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Reporting Organic Crops

Producers who want to use the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) organic price and select the "organic" option on their NAP application must report their crops as organic.

When certifying organic acres, the buffer zone acreage must be included in the organic acreage. Producers must also provide a current organic plan, organic certificate or documentation from a certifying agent indicating an organic plan is in effect. Documentation must include:

- Name of certified individuals, address and telephone number;
- Certificate number, effective date of certification, list of commodities certified and name and address of certifying agent; and
- A map showing the specific location of each field of certified organic, including the buffer zone acreage.

Certification exemptions are available for producers whose annual gross agricultural income from organic sales totals \$5,000 or less. Although exempt growers are not required to provide a written certificate, they are still required to provide a map showing the specific location of each field of certified organic, transitional and buffer zone acreage.

For questions about reporting organic crops, contact your local [FSA County Office](#).

Dates to Remember	
May 31, 2016	Deadline for nursery operations to file a crop certification report for the ensuing year
June 5, 2016	Deadline for Hawaii County producers to apply for Emergency Loans due to flooding that occurred August 24-September 27, 2015
July 15, 2016	Deadline to file a crop certification report for banana, papaya and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
December 13, 2016	Deadline for Hawaii County producers to apply for Emergency Loans due to impacts of drought
December 20, 2016	Deadline for Maui County producers to apply for Emergency Loans due to impacts of drought
Continuous	Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program sign-up

Farm Loan Graduation Reminder

Farm Service Agency (FSA) Direct Loans are considered a temporary source of credit that is available to producers who do not meet normal underwriting criteria for commercial banks.

Farm Service Agency periodically conducts Direct Loan graduation reviews to determine a borrower's ability to graduate to commercial credit. If the borrower's financial condition has improved to a point where they can refinance their debt with commercial credit, they will be asked to obtain other financing and partially or fully pay off their FSA debt.

By the end of a producer's operating cycle, the Agency will send a letter requesting a current balance sheet, actual financial performance and a projected farm budget. The borrower has 30 days to return the required financial documents. This information will be used to evaluate the borrower's potential for refinancing to commercial credit.

If a borrower meets local underwriting criteria, FSA will send the borrower's name, loan type, balance sheet and projected cash flow to commercial lenders. The borrower will be notified when loan information is sent to local lenders.

If any lenders are interested in refinancing the borrower's loan, FSA will send the borrower a letter with a list of lenders that are interested in refinancing the loan. The borrower must contact the lenders and complete an application for commercial credit within 30 calendar days.

If a commercial lender rejects the borrower, the borrower must obtain written evidence that specifies the reasons for rejection and submit to their local FSA Office.

If a borrower fails to provide the requested financial information or to graduate, FSA will notify the borrower of noncompliance, and FSA's intent to accelerate the loan, and appeal rights.

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