



Hawaii & Pacific Basin NEWSLETTER

May 2016



Your Farm Service Agency Online Monthly Newsletter Covering the Latest Topics

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Kauai County Designated Natural Disaster Area

The United States Department of Agriculture recently designated Kauai County as a primary natural disaster area due to damages and losses caused by a recent drought.

Kauai is the third county in the State of Hawaii to be designated natural disaster area, joining Hawaii and Maui counties. Qualified producers in these counties are eligible for low interest emergency (EM) loans from Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers in eligible counties 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.

Other FSA disaster assistance includes the [Emergency Conservation Program](#); [Livestock Forage Disaster Program](#); [Livestock Indemnity Program](#); [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program](#); and the [Tree Assistance Program](#). Producers may contact their [FSA County Office](#) for more information or go to <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>.

Relief for Livestock Forage Losses

Kauai, Maui and Hawaii county ranchers are now eligible to apply for 2016 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) benefits.

The Livestock Forage Program provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who suffer grazing losses for covered livestock due to drought on privately owned or cash leased land. Eligible livestock producers must complete a CCC-853 and the required supporting documentation no later than January 30, 2017 for 2016 losses.

Additional Information about LFP, including eligible livestock, is available at the local [FSA County Office](#) or online at: www.fsa.usda.gov.

Guaranteed Conservation Loans

Guaranteed Conservation Loans are available for applicants to install a conservation practice. These funds may be used for any conservation activities included in a conservation plan or Forest Stewardship Management plan. A copy of the conservation plan is required to complete the application.

These loans are not limited to just family farmers. In some cases, applicants can operate non-eligible enterprises. Loan funds are issued by a participating commercial lender and guaranteed up to 80 percent by FSA or up to 90 percent for beginning and historically underserved producers.

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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> - June 16, 2016 9:00 am</p> <p><u>Maui County</u> - June 16, 2016 at 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>	

Disaster Set-Aside Program

Farm Service Agency (FSA) borrowers with operations located in designated disaster areas who are unable to make their scheduled FSA loan payments should consider the Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) program.

The DSA is available to producers who suffered losses as a result of a natural disaster and is intended to relieve immediate and temporary financial stress. Farm Service Agency is authorized to consider setting aside one annual payment needed for the operation to continue on a viable scale. Borrowers must have at least two years left on the term of their loan.

Borrowers have eight months from the date of the disaster designation to submit a complete application including a written request for DSA signed by all parties liable for the debt along with production records and financial history for the operating year in which the disaster occurred. Farm Service Agency may request additional information from the borrower in order to determine eligibility.

All farm loans must be current or less than 90 days past due at the time the DSA application is complete. Borrowers may not set aside more than one installment on each loan. The amount set-aside, including interest accrued on the principal portion of the set-aside, is due on or before the final due date of the loan.

Loans for Underserved Producers

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 priority funding for members of targeted underserved applicants. A targeted underserved applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities. For purposes of this program, targeted underserved groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

Farm Service Agency loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

Loans for Portable Farm Storage and Handling Equipment

Farm Service Agency (FSA) now provides a new financing option to help farmers purchase portable storage and handling equipment through the Farm Loan Storage Facility Loan Program (FLSF). The loans, include a smaller microloan option with lower down payments, are designed to help producers, including new, small and mid-sized producers, grow their businesses and markets.

The new “microloan” option allows applicants seeking less than \$50,000 to qualify for a reduced down payment of five percent and no requirement to provide three years of production history. Farms and ranches of all sizes are eligible. The microloan option is expected to be of particular benefit to smaller farms and ranches, and specialty crop producers who may not have access to commercial storage or on-farm storage after harvest. These producers can invest in equipment like conveyers, scales or refrigeration units and trucks that can store commodities before delivering them to markets. Producers do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply.

Earlier this year, FSA significantly expanded the list of commodities eligible for FSFL to include aquaculture; floriculture; fruits (including nuts) and vegetables, corn; honey; unprocessed meat and poultry, eggs; milk, cheese, butter, yogurt and renewable biomass. Farm Storage Facility Loan microloans can also be used to finance wash and pack equipment used post-harvest, before a commodity is placed in cold storage.

Interest rates for the month of May 2016 are 0.875% for a 3 year loan, 1.250% for a 5 year loan, 1.625% for a 7 year loan, 1.750% for a 10 year loan and 1.875% for a 12 year loan.

To learn more about Farm Storage Facility Loans, contact a local [FSA County Office](#).

Interest Rates for May 2016	
Microloans	2.375 %
Farm Operating Loans	2.375 %
Farm Ownership Loans	3.50 %
Farm Ownership Loans Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50 %
Emergency Loans	3.375 %
Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 Years)	1.625%

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybee, and Farm-Raised Fish

The Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) provides emergency assistance to eligible livestock, honeybee, and farm-raised fish producers who have losses due to disease, adverse weather or other conditions not covered by other agricultural disaster assistance programs.

Eligible livestock losses include grazing losses not covered under the Livestock Forage Disaster Program, loss of purchased feed and/or mechanically harvested feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, additional cost of transporting water because of an eligible drought.

Eligible honeybee losses include loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, cost of additional feed purchased above normal quantities due to an eligible adverse weather condition, colony losses in excess of normal mortality due to an eligible weather event or loss condition, including Colony Collapse Disorder, and hive losses due to eligible adverse weather.

Eligible farm-raised fish losses include death losses in excess of normal mortality and/or loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event.

Producers who suffer eligible livestock, honeybee, or farm-raised fish losses from October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016 must file a notice of loss the earlier of 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent or by November 1, 2016. Producers must also file an application for payment by November 1, 2016.

The Farm Bill caps ELAP disaster funding at \$20 million per federal fiscal year.

To view ELAP fact sheets or other FSA program fact sheets, visit the FSA fact sheet web page at www.fsa.usda.gov/factsheets.



Expanded Microloan Program to Help Farmers Purchase Farmland and Improve Property

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is offering farm ownership microloans, creating a new financing avenue for farmers to buy and improve property. These microloans are especially helpful to beginning or underserved farmers and veterans looking for a career in farming, and those who have small and mid-sized farming operations.

Since 2013, the microloan program has been hugely successful providing more than 16,800 low-interest loans, totaling over \$373 million to producers across the country. Microloans have helped farmers and ranchers with operating costs, such as feed, fertilizer, tools, fencing, equipment, and living expenses. Seventy percent of loans have gone to new farmers.

Now, microloans will be available to also help with farm land and building purchases, and soil and water conservation improvements. Farm Service Agency (FSA) designed the expanded program to simplify the application process, expand eligibility requirements and expedite smaller real estate loans to help farmers strengthen their operations. Microloans provide up to \$50,000 to qualified producers, and can be issued to the applicant directly by FSA.

This microloan announcement is another USDA resource for America's farmers and ranchers to utilize, especially as [new and beginning farmers and ranchers](#) look for the assistance they need to get started. To learn more about the FSA microloan program visit www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans, or contact your local [FSA County Office](#).

A Simple Start to Retirement Savings

Don't have access to a retirement savings plan? The U.S. Department of the Treasury's *myRA* can help you get on the path to retirement saving. It costs nothing to open an account and there are no fees. Visit myRA.gov today to get started.

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).

Looking for a Career in Farm Loans?

If you are current permanent federal employee, former federal employee, Peace Corps or VISTA volunteer or a veteran you may be eligible to compete for open positions with the Hawaii and Pacific Basin Farm Service Agency (FSA). Vacancies include:

- Loan Assistant (GS-07) or Loan Specialist (GS-09); location in Hilo, Hawaii. Job announcement closes May 26, 2016.
- Loan Specialist (GS-09); location in Honolulu, Hawaii. Job announcement closes May 25, 2016.

For current FSA employees or USDA CTAP Candidates:

- Loan Specialist (GS-011); location in Honolulu, Hawaii. Job announcement closes May 25, 2016.

For details regarding who may apply and to submit an application go to: www.usajobs.gov



Looking for great ideas to expand your market; want to how to collaborate with your neighboring farmers and ranchers; need resources to make it happen? Visit: www.knowyourfarmer@usda.gov!

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
January 11, 2017	Deadline for Kauai County producers to apply for Emergency Loans due to impacts of drought
Continuous	Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program sign-up