



Hawaii & Pacific Basin NEWSLETTER

July 2016



Your Farm Service Agency Online Monthly Newsletter Covering the Latest Topics

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Funds for Geographically Disadvantaged Producers

Farm Service Agency (FSA) began issuing payments to agricultural producers enrolled in the Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment Program (RTCP) for fiscal year 2015 last month providing up to \$1.9 million to help offset transportation costs for geographically disadvantaged producers.

The 2014 Farm Bill reauthorized the program, which allows farmers and ranchers in Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau, as well as Alaska, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands to recover transportation costs.

Payments are calculated based on the costs incurred for transportation of the agricultural commodity or inputs, subject to an \$8,000 limit per producer per federal fiscal year; however, with total claims exceeding available funds, payments to recipients were reduced by 0.6621465 percent.

Enrollment for fiscal year 2016 began July 18, 2016, and will end September 9, 2016. Applicants will have until November 2, 2016, to provide supporting documentation. Payments for fiscal year 2016 will be made once all supporting documentation has been reviewed and approved.

For more information contact your local [FSA County Office](#).

FSAfarm+ A Self-Service Portal

Farm Service Agency (FSA) has launched a new tool to provide farmers and ranchers with remote access to their personal farm information using their home computers. Farmers and ranchers can now view, print or export their personal farm data all without visiting an FSA county office.

This new program *FSAfarm+* provides you with secure access to view your personal FSA data, such as base and yields, conservation program acreage, Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation status information, field boundaries, farm imagery, name and address details, contact information and membership interest and shares in the operation. This data will be available in real time, at no cost to the producer and allow operators and owners to export and print farm records, including maps. Producers also can electronically share their data with a crop insurance agent from their own personal computer.

Farm operators and owners first will need "Level 2 eAuthentication" to access the webportal. This level of security ensures that personal information is protected for each user. Level 2 access can be obtained by going to www.eauth.usda.gov, completing the required information and then visiting your local FSA County Office to finalize access.

For more information on *FSAfarm+*, and the customer self-service portal, contact your local [FSA County Office](#).

Got A Retirement Plan?

No? Start a retirement plan at myRA.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> - October 14, 2016 at 8 am</p> <p><u>Honolulu County</u> - September 16, 2016 at 3 pm</p> <p><u>Kauai County</u> - August 16, 2016 at 9 am</p> <p><u>Maui County</u> - July 21, 2016 at 8:30 am</p> <p><u>Guam County</u> - August 10, 2016 at 9:00 am</p> <p><u>CNMI County</u> - August 10, 2016 at 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>	

Direct Loans

Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers direct farm ownership and direct farm operating loans to producers who want to establish, maintain or strengthen their farm or ranch. Farm Service Agency loan officers process, approve and service direct loans.

Direct farm operating loans can be used to purchase livestock and feed, farm equipment, fuel, farm chemicals, insurance and other costs including family living expenses. Operating loans can also be used to finance minor improvements or repairs to buildings and to refinance some farm-related debts, excluding real estate.

Direct farm ownership loans can be used to purchase farmland, enlarge an existing farm, construct and repair buildings, and to make farm improvements.

The maximum loan amount for both direct farm ownership and operating loans is \$300,000 and a down payment is not required. Repayment terms vary depending on the type of loan, collateral and the producer's ability to repay the loan. Operating loans are normally repaid within seven years and farm ownership loans are not to exceed 40 years.

Please contact your local [FSA County Office](#) for more information or to apply for a direct farm ownership or operating loan.

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 submit the required supporting documentation to the Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Office 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.



Deadline August 1 for County Committee Nominations

The nomination period for all Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committees will begin on June 15, 2016. Nomination forms must be postmarked or received in the FSA County Office by August 1, 2016.

County Committees are unique to FSA and allow producers to have a voice in federal farm program implementation at the local level. To be eligible to serve on the FSA county committee, a person must participate in an agency administered program, be eligible to vote in a county committee election and reside in the Local Administrative Area (LAA) where they are nominated. All producers, including women, minority and beginning farmers and ranchers are encouraged to participate in the nomination and election process.

Nominations and elections are set for:

- Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands County – LAA #2 Saipan.
- Guam County – LAA #2 Parts of Yona (north of Route 17) to parts of Dededo (south of Ysengsong Road).
- Hawaii County – LAA #3 Hamakua and Waiakea Districts.
- Honolulu County – LAA #1 South East Oahu including Pearl City, downtown Honolulu, Hawaii Kai to Waimanalo.
- Kauai County – LAA #2 Kamalomalo, Kealia, Kapaa, Waipouli and North and South Oloheua.
- Maui County – LAA #3 Molokai and Lanai.

Producers may nominate themselves or others as candidates. Organizations representing minority and women farmers and ranchers may also nominate candidates. To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign form FSA-669A. The form and more information about county committee elections is available online at: www.fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Elected county committee members serve a three-year term and are responsible for making decisions on FSA disaster, conservation and price support programs, as well as other important federal farm program issues. County committees consist of three members.

County Committee Continued...

Farm Service Agency will mail election ballots to eligible voters beginning November 7, 2016. Ballots are due back in the FSA County Office by mail, or in person no later than December 5, 2016. Elected county committee members will take office January 1, 2017.

For more information about county committees, contact your [FSA County Office](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections) or visit www.fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Beginning Farmer Loans

Farm Service Agency (FSA) assists beginning farmers to finance agricultural enterprises. Under designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. Farm Service Agency defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's average size farm.

Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local FSA County Office. You may also visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

Need a loan to purchase a farm or ranch; get started with production; expand or improve your operation's efficiency and productivity? Visit: Farm Loan Programs.

Interest Rates for July 2016

Farm Operating Loans	2.25 %
Microloans	2.25 %
Farm Ownership Loans	3.50 %
Farm Ownership Loans Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50 %
Emergency Loans	3.25 %

USDA Offers Key Measures to Improve Pollinator Health

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently announced two initiatives in support of the [President's National Strategy to Promote the Health of Honeybees and Other Pollinators](#), which was announced just over one year ago. A review of USDA's most popular conservation program found that farmers and ranchers across the country are creating at least 15 million acres of healthy forage and habitat for pollinators, and the department has also entered into a new partnership with leading honey bee organizations that will help to ensure future conservation projects continue to provide benefits to these important species.

The USDA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the American Honey Producers Association and the American Beekeeping Federation to facilitate an ongoing partnership that will ensure USDA's conservation initiatives are as advantageous to pollinators and that beekeepers understand how they can benefit from USDA's conservation and safety net programs.

Farm Service Agency plays a critical role in the delivery of programs that provide a safety net for beekeepers who experience losses due to natural disasters, and the agency administers the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program, which provides assistance for the loss of honeybee colonies, in excess of normal mortality, due to Colony Collapse Disorder or other natural causes. These groups have helped to ensure that these safety net programs work well, and they have helped focus research to learn more about the impacts of USDA programs and make continuous improvements. This MOU creates a framework to ensure ongoing, meaningful information sharing to help beekeepers and honey bees into the future.

The National Strategy called for seven million acres of land to be enhanced or restored for pollinators. Since then, USDA has more than tripled the acreage enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program's pollinator initiative, through which USDA helps to cover the cost of planting pollinator-friendly wildflowers, legumes and shrubs, and USDA has increased the limit on this initiative in response to landowner demand so that more acres can be enrolled in the future.

This [fact sheet](#) contains more information about USDA's work to keep pollinators buzzing and contributing to a diverse domestic and global food supply.



“Without pollinators, we don't eat—it's simple as that—and, at the moment, large numbers of pollinators are dying. With the world's population projected to exceed 9 billion in just the next 30 years or so, that is not a good position for us to be in.” Read more in the recent [blog by Dr. Sonny Ramaswamy](#), Director, USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

Dates to Remember

July 18, 2016	2016 Reimbursement of Transportation Cost Payment Program Sign-Up Begins
August 1, 2016	Deadline for nominations to be received in the FSA County Office for FSA County Committee elections
September 9, 2016	Deadline to sign-up for the 2016 Reimbursement of Transportation Cost Payment Program
November 2, 2016	Deadline to submit documentation for the 2016 Reimbursement of Transportation Cost Payment 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

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).