



Hawaii & Pacific Basin NEWSLETTER

October 2016



Your Farm Service Agency Online Monthly Newsletter Covering the Latest Topics

In this Issue:

Page 1:

**Agricultural
Emergency Loans are
Now Available**

**RTCP Deadline
Reminder**

**December 1st—NAP
Deadline**

Page 2:

**USDA to Conduct
On-Farm Labor
Survey in Hawaii and
U.S.**

Page 3:

**Jason Shitanishi
FSA's Employee of
the Year**

**Weather the Storm:
FEMA Mobile APP
Provides Weather
Alerts and Safety Tips**

**Interest Rates for
October 2016**

Page 4:

**USDA Packages
Disaster Protection
Loans to Benefit
Specialty Crop and
Diversified Producers**

**USDA Reminders
Producers of
November 1 ELAP
Application Deadline**

Page 5:

Dates to Remember

Agricultural Emergency Loans are Now Available

Commercial agricultural producers in Maui County, whose operations suffered physical damage or losses caused by flooding, landslides and mudslides that occurred September 11-14, 2016, may be eligible for [Emergency Loans](#) through the United State Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency (FSA).

Eligible producers can borrow up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses to a maximum amount of \$500,000 at a low interest rate. Farm Service Agency will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. Deadline to apply is June 6, 2017.

In addition to the Emergency Loans, FSA has a variety of disaster assistance programs to help eligible farmers and ranchers recover from a wide range of adversities.

The availability of FSA's emergency loan program was triggered by Presidential Major Disaster Declaration 4282, which President Obama signed on October 7, 2016.

For more information about Emergency Loans, please contact the FSA Maui County Office at 871-5500 for an appointment or visit the FSA's website at www.fsa.usda.gov/hi.

RTCP Deadline—November 4th
November 4, 2016 is the deadline to submit to the Farm Service Agency County Office documentation for the Reimbursement of Transportation Costs Payment Program.

December 1st—NAP Deadline

With the recent substantial number of severe weather systems impacting Hawaii and Pacific Island producers, it has never been a better time to sign up for 2017 NonInsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). The deadline for vegetable and fruit producers to sign up for coverage is December 1, 2016.

This program covers crop losses from natural adversities such as drought and excessive moisture. Coverage is available for production of vegetables, fruit, forage and grazing crops, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

NonInsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production. Optional NAP Buy-Up offers higher levels of coverage, up to 65 percent of expected production at 100 percent of the average market price, including coverage for organics and crops marketed directly to consumers.

The 2014 Farm Bill expanded NAP to include higher levels of protection. Beginning, underserved and limited resource farmers are now eligible for free catastrophic level coverage, as well as discounted premiums for additional levels of protection.

To learn more about NAP and NAP Buy-Up plan to attend one of the NAP Workshops being offered soon or visit ww.fsa.usda.gov/nap or contact your local FSA County Office.

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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> - January 13, 2017 at 8:00 am</p> <p><u>Honolulu County</u> - October 21, 2016 at 3:00 pm</p> <p><u>Kauai County</u> - November 15, 2016 at 9:00 am</p> <p><u>Maui County</u> - October 20, 2016 at 8:30 am</p> <p><u>Guam County</u> - December 7, 2016 at 9:00 am</p> <p><u>CNMI County</u> - December 7, 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>	

USDA to Conduct On-Farm Labor Survey in Hawaii and the U.S.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is gearing up to conduct the Agricultural Labor Survey, which is conducted twice each year. The survey will collect information about hired labor from more than 477 Hawaii farmers and ranchers.

"Labor is obviously critical to farming operations in Hawaii, and data about the use of hired workers helps administer farm labor programs," said Chris Messer, Director of the NASS Pacific Regional Office. "The data that farm operators provide through NASS's Agricultural Labor Survey helps Hawaii's leaders, associations, and farmers themselves make decisions based on accurate information."

USDA and the U.S. Department of Labor will use statistics gathered in the Agricultural Labor Survey to establish minimum wage rates for agricultural workers, administer farm labor recruitment and placement service programs, and assist legislators in determining labor policies.

The survey asks participants to answer a variety of questions about hired farm labor on their operations, including total number of hired farm workers, the average hours worked, and wage rates paid for the weeks of July 10-16 and October 9-15. For their convenience, survey participants have the option to respond online.

"By asking about two separate time periods in one survey, we are able to publish quarterly data and capture seasonal variation, while also reducing the number of surveys respondents receive and the time they spend responding," said Messer.

NASS will publish survey results in the November 17 Farm Labor report. All previous Farm Labor publications are available online at <http://bit.ly/FarmLabor>. For more information on NASS surveys and reports, call the NASS Pacific Regional Office at 1-800-851-1127.





Jason Shitanishi on right receives FSA Hawaii and Pacific Basin Employee of the Year from State Executive Director Diane Ley.

Jason Shitanishi FSA's Employee of the Year

Each year, Farm Service Agency (FSA) Hawaii and Pacific Basin's staff nominate one or more of their peers as the Employee of the Year, and for 2016 the selected employee is Jason Shitanishi.

Jason serves as the County Executive Director for Honolulu County and is known as a pillar of the agricultural community due to the fact that he always makes time to help producers, his fellow employees and other stakeholders.

Recently, Jason assisted the Pacific Gateway Center to delineate and map 5-acre parcels within the Center's new 150-acre lease in Central Oahu that will eventually be subleased to immigrant producers including those who were victims of human trafficking. Jason devoted his personal time to complete the mapping; thus, allowing the Center to avoid the cost of a hired surveyor for which there were no funds available.

The Pacific Gateway Center's new agriculture park manager Nora Sisouphanthong said of Jason, *"You are incredible... Without your help I don't know how we could get this done!"*

The new agricultural park will enable 30 immigrant farmers and their families to pursue new economic opportunities.

Jason puts in extra effort such as this mapping project despite the FSA Honolulu County Office being short-staffed. He is always upbeat and positive. Jason is described by his fellow employees, as "... not only a model employee but a model citizen."

Jason, thank you for all you do!

Weather the Storm: FEMA Mobile App Provides Weather Alerts and Safety Tips

USDA offers programs to help producers recover from disasters; FEMA can help you prepare ahead of time.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recently launched a free mobile app that will instruct the public on what to before, during and after emergencies. The app is available for download for Apple, Android and Blackberry mobile devices.

Download the app to:

- Receive alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five locations
- Get safety reminders, read tips to survive natural disasters and customize your emergency checklist
- Locate open shelters and where to talk to FEMA in person (or on the phone)
- Upload and share your disaster photos to help first responders.

For more information about the FEMA app, visit fema.gov/mobile-app. To download the FEMA app from the Apple Store visit <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/fema/id474807486?mt=8>. To download the FEMA app on Google Play for Android visit: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=gov.fema.mobile.android&hl=en>

Interest Rates for October 2016	
Farm Operating Loans	2.125 %
Microloans	2.125 %
Farm Ownership Loans	3.125%
Farm Ownership Microloans	3.125%
Farm Ownership Loans Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50 %
Emergency Loans	3.125 %

USDA Packages Disaster Protection with Loans to Benefit Specialty Crop and Diversified Producers

Producers who apply for FSA farm loans will be offered the opportunity to enroll in new disaster loss protections created by the 2014 Farm Bill. The new coverage, available from the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), is available to FSA loan applicants who grow non-insurable crops, so this is especially important to fruit and vegetable producers and other specialty crop growers.

New, underserved and limited income specialty growers who apply for farm loans could qualify for basic loss coverage at no cost, or higher coverage for a discounted premium.

The basic disaster coverage protects at 55 percent of the market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of production. Covered crops include “specialty” crops, for instance, vegetables, fruits, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, hay, forage, grazing and energy crops. FSA allows beginning, underserved or limited income producers to obtain NAP coverage up to 90 days after the normal application closing date when they also apply for FSA credit.

In addition to free basic coverage, beginning, underserved or limited income producers are eligible for a 50 percent discount on premiums for the higher levels of coverage that protect up to 65 percent of expected production at 100 percent of the average market price. Producers also may work with FSA to protect value-added production, such as organic or direct market crops, at their fair market value in those markets. Targeted underserved groups eligible for free or discounted coverage are American Indians or Alaskan Natives, Asians, Blacks or African Americans, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, and women.

Farm Service Agency offers a variety of loan products, including farm ownership loans, operating loans and microloans that have a streamlined application process.

Growers need not apply for an FSA loan, nor be a beginning, limited resource, or underserved farmer, to be eligible for Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program assistance. To learn more, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/nap or www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans, or contact your local FSA office at <https://offices.usda.gov>.

USDA Reminds Producers of November 1 ELAP Application Deadline

Eligible livestock, honeybee, and farm-raised fish producers who experienced losses due to disease, adverse weather or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires, not covered by other agricultural disaster assistance programs, have until Nov. 1, 2016, to submit an application and notice of loss under the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP).

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 those 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
- An application for payment by November 1, 2016

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

The following ELAP Fact Sheets are available online:

- ELAP for Farm-Raised Fish Fact Sheet
- ELAP for Livestock Fact Sheet
- ELAP for Honeybees Fact Sheet

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



Dates to Remember

November 1, 2016	Deadline to submit a notice of loss under the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)
November 2, 2016	Deadline to submit documentation for the 2016 Reimbursement of Transportation Cost Payment Program
November 7, 2016	County Committee Election Ballots will be mailed to eligible producers
December 1, 2016	NAP Insurance Deadline for vegetables, fruit, forage, grazing crops, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy and industrial crops
December 5, 2016	Deadline to return County Committee Election Ballots
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
June 6, 2017	Deadline for Maui County producers to apply for Emergency loans due to impacts of flooding, landslides and mudslides

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