
November 2016



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Diane's Comments

Happy Thanksgiving Everyone!

As the season of reflection and great cheer begins anew, let me share that I am so very indebted and thankful to all of you – agricultural producers and those who support producers throughout Hawaii and the Pacific Basin. Your creativity, dedication and hard work continues to drive and expand the agricultural sector!

It has been my privilege and honor to serve all of you for the past seven years as the State Executive Director of the Farm Service Agency. On December 1st, I will return home to work for the County of Hawaii and hope that I will have opportunities to work with some of you in the future.

In the meantime, thank you – si yu'us ma'ase – fa'afetai lava for all that you do. Until we meet again, take care.

Diane L. Ley, State Executive Director
USDA Farm Service Agency Hawaii & Pacific Basin

**Hawaii & Pacific
Basin FSA State
Office**

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USDA Expands Working-Lands Conservation Opportunities through CRP

USDA will offer a new Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands practice specifically tailored for small-scale livestock grazing operations. Small livestock operations with 100 or fewer head of grazing dairy cows (or the equivalent) can submit applications to enroll up to

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**State Executive
Director:**
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**Chief Program
Specialist:**
Steve Peterson

**Chief, Farm Loan
Program:**
Steve Bazzell

**Upcoming County
Committee Meetings:**

Hawaii County
Committee
January 13, 2017: 9:00
am

Honolulu County
Committee
December 16, 2016: 3:00
pm

Maui County Committee
December 15,
2016: 8:30am

Kauai County Committee
December 20, 2016
: 9:00 am

Guam County Committee
December 7, 2016: 9:00
am

CNMI County Committee
December 7, 2016: 9:00
am

Contact the County Office
to confirm meeting date
and time, as budget
constraints may limit the
County Committee's
ability to meet each
month.

[Click here for a list of
County Offices, contact
numbers and addresses.](#)

200 acres of grasslands per farm. USDA's goal is to enroll up to
200,000 acres.

The current CRP Grassland ranking period will end on Nov. 10, 2016.
To date, the USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) has received nearly
5,000 offers covering over 1 million acres for this CRP working-lands
conservation program. These offers are predominantly larger acreage
ranchland in Western states.

The new practice for small-scale livestock grazers aims, in part, to
encourage greater diversity geographically and in types of livestock
operation. This opportunity will close on Dec. 16, 2016. Offers selected
this fiscal year will be enrolled into CRP Grasslands beginning Oct. 1,
2017.

Participants in CRP Grasslands establish or maintain long-term,
resource-conserving grasses and other plant species to control soil
erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat on marginally
productive agricultural lands. CRP Grasslands participants can use the
land for livestock production (e.g. grazing or producing hay), while
following their conservation and grazing plans in order to maintain the
cover. A goal of CRP Grasslands is to minimize conversion of
grasslands either to row crops or to non-agricultural uses. Participants
can receive annual payments of up to 75 percent of the grazing value of
the land and up to 50 percent to fund cover or practices like cross-
fencing to support rotational grazing or improving pasture cover to
benefit pollinators or other wildlife.

USDA will select offers for enrollment based on six ranking factors: (1)
current and future use, (2) new farmer/rancher or underserved producer
involvement, (3) maximum grassland preservation, (4) vegetative cover,
(5) environmental factors and (6) pollinator habitat. Offers for the
second ranking period also will be considered from producers who
submitted offers for the first ranking period but were not accepted, as
well as from new offers submitted through Dec. 16.

Small livestock operations or other farming and ranching operations
interested in participating in CRP Grasslands should contact their local
FSA office. To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>. To
learn more about FSA's conservation programs, visit
www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation.

**Website for Hawaii and
Pacific Basin FSA:**

www.fsa.usda.gov/hi

Preauthorized Debit Available for Farm Loan Borrowers

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) has implemented pre-authorized debit (PAD) for Farm Loan Program (FLP) borrowers. PAD is a voluntary and alternative method for making weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annual or annual payments on loans.

PAD payments are pre authorized transactions that allow the National Financial and Accounting Operations Center (NFAOC) to electronically collect loan payments from a customer's account at a financial institution.

PAD may be useful for borrowers who use nonfarm income from regular wages or salary to make payments on loans or adjustment offers or for payments from seasonal produce stands. PAD can only be established for future payments.

To request PAD, customers, along with their financial institution, must fill out form RD 3550-28. This form has no expiration date, but a separate form RD 3550-28 must be completed for each loan to which payments are to be applied. A fillable form can be accessed on the USDA Rural Development (RD) website at <http://www.rd.usda.gov/publications/regulations-guidelines>. Click forms and search for "Form 3550-28."

If you have a "filter" on the account at your financial institution, you will need to provide the financial institution with the following information: Origination ID: 1220040804, Agency Name: USDA RD DCFO.

PAD is offered by FSA at no cost. Check with your financial institution to discuss any potential cost. Preauthorized debit has no expiration date, but you can cancel at any time by submitting a written request to your local FSA office. If a preauthorized debit agreement receives three payment rejections within a three month period, the preauthorized debt agreement will be cancelled by FSA. The payment amount and due date of your loan is not affected by a cancellation of preauthorized debit. You are responsible to ensure your full payment is made by the due date.

For more information about PAD, contact your local FSA office. To find a local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>

Measurement Service

Farmers who would like a guarantee on their crop plantings and land use acreages can make it official by using the FSA measurement service. Producers must file a request with the county office staff and pay the cost of a field visit to have stake and referencing done on the farm. Measurement service is available using digital imagery. If an on-site visit is not required producers are charged a reduced rate.

Incorrect acreage self-certification can result in reduced program payments, penalty or loss of eligibility.

USDA Financial Assistance Available to Help Organic Farmers Create Conservation Buffers

USDA is assisting organic farmers with the cost of establishing up to 20,000 acres of new conservation buffers and other practices on and near farms that produce organic crops.

The financial assistance is available from the USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), a federally funded voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so that environmentally sensitive land is not farmed or ranched, but instead used for conservation benefits. CRP participants establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as “covers”) to control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is between 10 and 15 years.

For conservation buffers, funds are available for establishing shrubs and trees, or supporting pollinating species, and can be planted in blocks or strips. Interested organic producers can offer eligible land for enrollment in this initiative at any time.

Other USDA FSA programs that assist organic farmers include:

- The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program that provides financial assistance for 55 to 100 percent of the average market price for organic crop losses between 50 to 65 percent of expected production due to a natural disaster.
- Marketing assistance loans that provide interim financing to help producers meet cash flow needs without having to sell crops during harvest when market prices are low, and deficiency payments to producers who forgo the loan in return for a payment on the eligible commodity.
- A variety of loans for operating expenses, ownership or guarantees with outside lenders, including streamlined microloans that have a lower amount of paperwork.
- Farm Storage Facility Loans for that provide low-interest financing to build or upgrade storage facilities for organic commodities, including cold storage, grain bins, bulk tanks and drying and handling equipment.
- Services such as mapping farm and field boundaries and reporting organic acreage that can be provided to a farm’s organic certifier or crop insurance agent.

Visit www.fsa.usda.gov/organic to learn more about how FSA can help organic farmers. For an interactive tour of CRP success stories, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/CRPis30 or follow #CRPis30 on Twitter. To learn more about FSA programs visit a local FSA office or www.fsa.usda.gov. To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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>

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.

The 2014 Farm Bill requires a customer 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. Electronic receipts for acreage reports will begin on August 1, 2016.

A service is any information, program or loan assistance provided whether through a visit, email, fax or letter.

Interest Rates for November 2016

Farm Operating Loans 2.125 %
 MicroLoans 2.125 %
 Farm Ownership Loans 3.250 %
 Farm Ownership Microloans 3.250 %
 Farm Ownership Loans Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher 1.5 %
 Emergency Loans 3.125 %

Additional information

1. [Click here](#) to read about employment opportunities with the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture.

Dates to Remember

December 1, 2016 - Deadline to apply for 2016 Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program and Buy-Up for fruit, vegetables, grazed forage and honey

December 13, 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 16, 2016 - Deadline to apply for Conservation Reserve Program Grasslands

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

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. 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).

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