

June 2017



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

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Hawaii & Pacific Basin State FSA Newsletter

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Hawaii & Pacific Basin State Farm Service Agency

PJKK Federal Building
P.O. Box 50065
300 Ala Moana Blvd, Rm 5-
108
Honolulu, HI 96850

Phone: 808-600-2964
Fax: 855-356-9493

www.fsa.usda.gov/hi

Acting State Executive Director:

Steve Peterson

Chief Program Specialist:
Steve Peterson

Census of Agriculture Countdown Begins for America's Farmers and Ranchers

America's farmers and ranchers will soon have the opportunity to strongly represent agriculture in their communities and industry by taking part in the 2017 Census of Agriculture. Conducted every five years by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the census, to be mailed at the end of this year, is a complete count of all U.S. farms, ranches, and those who operate them.

The Census of Agriculture highlights land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures, and other topics. The 2012 Census of Agriculture revealed that over three million farmers operated more than two million farms, spanning over 914 million acres. This was a four percent decrease in the number of U.S. farms from the previous census in 2007. However, agriculture sales, income, and expenses increased between 2007 and 2012. This telling information and thousands of other agriculture statistics are a direct result of responses to the Census of Agriculture.

Chief, Farm Loan Program:

Steve Bazzell

Upcoming County Meetings:

Hawaii County Committee
July 14, 2017 at 8:30 am

Honolulu County Committee
July 21, 2017 at 3:00 pm

Maui County Committee
July 19, 2017 at 8:30 am

Kauai County Committee
July 20, 2017 at 9:00 am

Guam County Committee
July 5, 2017 at 10:00 am

CNMI County Committee
July 12, 2017 at 10:00 am

[Click here](#) to find contact information for your local office.

Producers who are new to farming or did not receive a Census of Agriculture in 2012 still have time to sign up to receive the 2017 Census of Agriculture report form by visiting www.agcensus.usda.gov and clicking on the 'Make Sure You Are Counted' button through June. NASS defines a farm as any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year (2017).

County Committee Nominations Open

The nomination period for all Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committees will begin on June 15, 2017. Nomination forms must be postmarked or received in the FSA County Office by August 1, 2017.

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 #3 - Farm/ranch land located in Tinian.
- Guam County – LAA #3 - Farm/ranch land located in South Guam, parts of Yona (south of Route 17), Santa Rita, Agat, Umatac, Merizo, Inarajan and Talafofo.
- Hawaii County – LAA #1 - Farm/ranch land located in the Puna and Kau District.
- Honolulu County – LAA #2 - Farm/ranch land located on the Windward side of the island. Starting from the north end of Waimanalo up to the northern tip of Kahuku.
- Kauai County – LAA #1 - Farm/ranch land located in Niihau, Waimea, Koloa and up to Lihue.
- Maui County – LAA #2 - Farm/ranch land located on the island of Maui, south and south west of Kuihelani Highway, Hana Highway., Haleakala Highway and Kekaulike Avenue. It includes the communities of Kula, Omaopio, Kihei, Pukalani, Ulupalakua, Kanaio, Kahikinui, Kaupo and Kipahulu.

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.

Farm Service Agency will mail election ballots to eligible voters beginning November 6, 2017. Ballots are due back in the FSA County Office by mail or in person no later than December 4, 2017. Elected county committee members will take office January 1, 2018.

For more information about county committees, contact your FSA County Office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Payment Limitations by Program

The 2014 Farm Bill established a maximum dollar amount for each program that can be received annually, directly or indirectly, by each person or legal entity. Payment limitations vary by program for 2014 through 2018.

Below is an overview of payment limitations by program.

Commodity and Price Support Programs

The annual limitation for the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs) and Market Loan Gains is \$125,000 total.

Conservation Programs

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) annual rental payment and incentive payment is limited to \$50,000. CRP contracts approved before Oct. 1, 2008, may exceed the limitation, subject to payment limitation rules in effect on the date of contract approval.

The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) has an annual limit of \$200,000 per disaster event. The Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) has an annual limit of \$500,000 per disaster event.

Disaster Assistance Programs

The annual limitation of \$125,000 applies to the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP), Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) and Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP). The total payments received under ELAP, LFP and LIP may not exceed \$125,000. A separate limitation of \$125,000 applies to Tree Assistance Program (TAP) payments. There is also a separate \$125,000 payment limit for the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP).

Payment limitations also apply to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs. Contact your local NRCS office more information.

For more information on FSA payment limitations by program, visit https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdfiles/FactSheets/2015/payment_eligibility_payment_limitations.pdf

Farm Reconstitutions

When changes in farm ownership or operation take place, a farm reconstitution is necessary. The reconstitution — or recon — is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation.

Total Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and non-ARC/PLC farms may be reconstituted at any time.

If you've had a change in farm ownership or operation, [contact your local Farm Service Agency County office](#).

June 2017 Interest Rates

Farm Operating Loans - 2.875%

Farm Operating Microloans - 2.875%

Farm Ownership Loans - 3.875%

Farm Ownership Microloans - 3.875%

Farm Ownership Loans Direct Down Payment for Beginning Farmer or Rancher - 1.5%

Emergency Loans 3.75%

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