



# Hawaii & Pacific Basin NEWSLETTER

January 2016



Your Farm Service Agency Online Monthly Newsletter Covering the Latest Topics

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**Happy  
New  
Year!!**

## Microloans to Buy Land and More

Agriculture Deputy Secretary Krysta Harden recently announced that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has begun offering farm ownership microloans, creating a new financing avenue for farmers to buy and improve property and install conservation improvements.

“Many producers tell us that access to land is one of the biggest challenges they face in establishing and growing their own farming operation,” said Harden. “USDA is making it easier for new farmers to hit the ground running and get access to the land that they need to establish their farms or improve their property.”

Since 2013, the Microloan Program has helped more than 16,800 producers access low-interest loans to cover costs for feed, fertilizer, tools, fencing, equipment, and living expenses. The program offers a simplified application process, expanded eligibility options and expedited small real estate loans. Microloans provide up to \$50,000 to qualified producers. Contact your [FSA County Office](#) for an appointment today.

Dates to Remember	
January 30, 2016	Deadline for Maui and Kauai ranchers to apply for 2015 Livestock Forage Disaster Program
January 30, 2016	Deadline to file a notice of loss and application for payment under the Livestock Indemnity Program for 2015
February 5, 2016	Deadline for Guam County producers to apply for Emergency Loans due to Typhoon Dolphin impacts
April 5, 2016	Deadline for Saipan and Tinian producers to apply for Emergency Loans due to Typhoon Soudelor impacts
April 19, 2016	Deadline for Maui and Kauai County producers to apply for Emergency Loans due to impacts of drought

## Disaster Assistance Deadline for Maui and Kauai Ranchers

Maui and Kauai county ranchers are eligible to apply for 2015 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) benefits to compensate for grazing losses for covered livestock due to drought on privately owned or cash leased land.

For 2015 and subsequent years, eligible livestock producers must complete a CCC-853 and the required supporting documentation no later than 30 calendar days after the end of the calendar year (January 30, 2016) in which the grazing losses occurred. Losses must occur in the calendar year the application is being filed.

Additional information about LFP, including eligible livestock, is available at your [FSA County Office](#) or online at: [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

## Risk Management Agency to Meet

Associate Administrator and Regional Director of RMA will visit with Hawaii producers February 5-10, 2016 to discuss program opportunities and address concerns. Dates and locations to be announced soon.

For more information regarding RMA go to [www.rma.usda.gov](http://www.rma.usda.gov).

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<b>Office Hours: Monday—Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm</b>	
<p><b>Next County Committee Meeting Dates:</b></p> <p><u>Hawaii County</u> - April 8, 2016 at 8:30 am</p> <p><u>Honolulu County</u> - February 3, 2016 at 3:00 pm</p> <p><u>Kauai County</u> - February 15, 2016 at 10:00 am</p> <p><u>Maui County</u> - February 18, 2016 at 8:30 am</p> <p><u>Guam County</u> - February 10, 2016 at 9:00 am</p> <p><u>CNMI County</u> - February 10, 2016 at 1:00 pm</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><a href="http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/hi_cof_staff.pdf">http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/hi_cof_staff.pdf</a></p>	

**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](#).**

<b>Loan Interest Rates for January 2016</b>	
MicroLoans	2.625 %
Farm Operating Loans	2.625 %
Farm Ownership Loans	3.875 %
Farm Ownership Loans Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50 %
Emergency Loans	3.625%

### **No Weapons In Federal Facilities**

This is an important reminder to all customers and patrons of USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices and USDA Service Centers statewide that firearms are forbidden (even with a permit/license) in Federal Buildings. A Federal Building by definition is any building owned, leased or rented by the Federal Government, where Federal employees are regularly present for the purpose of performing their official duties.

The items that are prohibited in Federal facilities include any item prohibited by any applicable Federal, State, local, and tribal law and/or ordinance, as well as firearms, dangerous weapons, explosives, or other destructive devices (including their individual parts or components) designed, redesigned, used, intended for use, or readily converted to cause injury, death, or property damage. Possession of firearms and dangerous weapons in Federal facilities as outline above is a crime punishable by fines and imprisonment.

For a complete list of items prohibited in Federal facilities, please view and/or download the document titled, Items Prohibited from Federal Facilities: An Interagency Security Committee Standard: <http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/isc-items-prohibited-federal-facilities-feb-2013-508.pdf>. The lists of prohibited items outlined in this document apply to all facility occupants, contractors, and the visiting public.

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).

## Beyond Sugar

Diane L. Ley, FSA State Executive Director

Once upon a time – or at least history tells us, Hawaii’s sugar plantations supported a stable economy and employment for the masses including successive waves of immigrants. Yet, we know the reality to be a mix of good times and times of instability. Through the years, variables in the sugar industry have included high cost of production, swings in market prices and inconsistent weather. Societal changes also generated great flux in the industry including demands for increased wages, improved working conditions and shorter work days. Also, plantation parents encouraged their children to seek careers beyond agriculture.

Over the course of 150 years the number of sugar operations in Hawaii multiplied greatly. However successive consolidations followed creating a mere handful of operations on each of the Hawaiian Islands. Today Hawaii’s last sugar plantation, Hawaiian Commercial and Sugar (HCS), will close at the end of 2016.



USDA’s [New and Beginning Farmer and Rancher](#) web tool is just a click away.

Through the transition ahead, the USDA will be available to provide support with technical guidance, grants, loans and much more. Fortuitously, the USDA recently announced a nationwide commitment to prioritize \$5.6 billion over the next two years within USDA programs and services that serve new and beginning farmers and ranchers.

Along with USDA’s initiative a new, tailored web tool has been launched to connect burgeoning entrepreneurs with programs and resources available to help them get started. The New and Beginning Farmer and Rancher web tool is available at [www.usda.gov/newfarmers](http://www.usda.gov/newfarmers). It features advice and guidance on everything a new business owner needs to know, from writing a business plan to obtaining a loan to grow their business to filing taxes as a small business owner. By answering a series of questions about the vision for their operation, new producers can use the site’s Discovery Tool to build a personalized set of recommendations of USDA, state and local programs and services.



*Hawaiian Commercial and Sugar was central to Maui County’s economy and lifestyle for over a century.*

As HCS begins its year long closing process, we at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) want to express our deep concern to the owners of HCS, the soon-to-be displaced employees and the affiliated businesses that all contributed to 145 years of sugar production on the island of Maui. The transition ahead is huge; yet, change will occur!

Hawaiian Commercial and Sugar’s parent company plans to keep up to 36,000 acres in active agriculture through possible diversification into energy and food crops, orchards and livestock. For those with an entrepreneurial spirit and vision, plans for a new agricultural park with priority for displaced sugar employees

Service is also available at the USDA Service Center in Kahului where knowledgeable staff of the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service and Rural Development can meet with producers to explore the best options available to address the producer’s vision, particular situation and needs. Appointments can be made by calling 871-5500. Also look for USDA staff at upcoming community transitional meetings to learn more about the services USDA can provide.



## Rural Energy for America Program

Agricultural producers and small businesses located in rural areas can alleviate the high cost of energy and ease the burden of investing in energy systems with grants and guaranteed loans made through the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development's (RD) Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). Program support options include:

- Renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement loan guarantee and grant combinations;
- Renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement loan guarantees; and
- Renewable energy system and energy efficiency improvement grants.

Requests for grants may not exceed 25 percent of a project's cost – either for stand-alone grant requests or for grants combined with loan guarantees. Eligible systems include generation systems utilizing solar, wind, biomass, hydropower, hydrogen and geothermal. Eligible energy efficiency projects include retrofitting of lights, replacement of pumps and motors, and new refrigeration/cooling units.



## Surfing Goat Dairy Farm Goes Solar

Most people don't picture goat dairy farms in Hawaii and with good reason. There are only two.

When German expatriates Thomas and Eva Kafsack made the jump across the world with dreams of operating a dairy farm they settled on 42 acres nestled

around sugarcane fields on the slopes of Maui's Haleakala Crater.

As their business and herd expanded, so did their utility expenses. Operating a substantial amount of machinery, primarily refrigeration equipment, they teamed up with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development (RD) to fund the solar energy solution they desired in their quest to stabilize rising utility expenses through the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP).

*Going solar the Kafsacks' business saved \$16,183 annually.*

With a combination of Surfing Goat Dairy Farm own funds and a \$70,060 grant from RD, the Kafsack's were able to purchase and install a 35.12 kilowatt photovoltaic system for their facility.

A photovoltaic array of panels not only provides a cleaner environment, with a projected 2,199 ton reduction of carbon dioxide emissions in the next 25 years, it produces enough energy to cover 104 percent of the Surfing Goat Dairy Farm's needs. This saves the Kafsacks' business \$16,183 annually.

This project is an example of the many ways USDA is helping revitalize rural economies. Using alternative and renewable energy sources improve the bottom line for businesses while protecting the rural communities in which we live. Rural Development is dedicated to providing opportunity and access for rural small businesses to improve their operations through energy efficient technologies. Rural Development's REAP program is one of these available opportunities.

For information on REAP, click on [REAP](#) or contact USDA Rural Development staff at (808) 933-8380.

*Goats at rest at Surfing Goat Dairy Farm.*

