



# Hawaii & Pacific Basin NEWSLETTER

May 2015



Your Farm Service Agency Online Monthly Newsletter Covering the Latest Topics

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## **Ag Hit Hard in Guam and CNMI**

Last week Typhoon Dolphin roared through the channel separating Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) hitting farmers and ranchers hard with winds of 110 miles per hour and heavy rain. While damage assessments are on-going by Farm Service Agency (FSA) staff and other agencies, producers should not wait to report their losses to the FSA County Office.

Producers who are signed up for the [Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program](#) (NAP) have 72 hours to report their losses to FSA following a disaster or when losses become apparent.

Other FSA programs which may assist commercial agricultural producers impacted by Typhoon Dolphin include:

- [Tree Assistance Program](#) (TAP) is available for qualifying fruit orchardists of papaya, banana and tropical fruits. The program provides cost share to clean up and replant.
- [Livestock Indemnity Program](#) (LIP) helps offset ranchers' losses of cattle, goats or sheep.
- [Farm Loan Programs](#) offers low-interest loans to assist producers. Additionally, producers with existing loans with FSA should contact their loan officer once they anticipate having problems making their regular payments, as FSA may be able to modify their payment schedule or meet other needs.

To report losses, get more information or to schedule an appointment, call FSA Guam/CNMI County Office at (671) 472-7568 in Guam or from the CNMI call (670) 234-0896 toll free or fax to (855) 356-9491.

## **June 1 Deadline for Conservation Compliance**

Changes mandated through the 2014 Farm Bill require producers to have a Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation Certification (AD-1026) on file.

For farmers to be eligible for premium support on their federal crop insurance, a completed and signed AD-1026 form must be on file with the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Since many FSA, Natural Resource Conservation (NRCS) and Risk Management Agency (RMA) programs have this requirement; most producers should already have an AD-1026 on file. If producers have not filed, they must do so by June 1, 2015. When a farmer completes the AD-1026, FSA and NRCS staff will outline any additional actions that may be required for compliance with the provisions.

Since enactment of the 1985 Farm Bill, eligibility for most commodity, disaster, and conservation programs has been linked to compliance with the highly erodible land conservation and wetland conservation provisions. The 2014 Farm Bill continues this requirement that producers adhere to conservation compliance guidelines to be eligible for most programs administered by FSA, NRCS and RMA. This includes the Livestock Disaster Assistance programs and conservation programs, as well as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and other programs.

Farm Service Agency recently released a revised form AD-1026, which is available at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.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> - July 10 at 8:30 am</p> <p><u>Honolulu County</u> - June 19 at 3:00 pm</p> <p><u>Kauai County</u> - June 17 at 8:30 am</p> <p><u>Maui County</u> - May 21 at 9:00 am</p> <p><u>Guam County</u> - August 12 at 9:00 am</p> <p><u>CNMI County</u> - August 12 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><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>	

## Upcoming 2015 County Committee Elections

The 2015 County Committee (COC) nomination period for the fall COC election is coming up. This is an opportunity for farmers and ranchers to run for and be elected to represent producers in their community as a member of their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) COC.

Significant emphasis continues to be placed on encouraging diversity of the COCs' make-up; hence, FSA is working diligently to increase the number of minorities and women farmers and ranchers nominated for COCs.

Nomination forms (FSA-669A's) are available:

- At <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections>; scroll down to the links under "Election Materials" and click on "2015 Nomination Form"
- By picking up a COC nomination form at your local FSA County Office
- Or by calling your local FSA County Office and requesting a COC nomination form be sent to you.

June 15, 2015 marks the start of the nomination period, and August 3, 2015 is the last day to submit nominations for the 2015 COC elections.

## Hawaii County Office Upstairs-Downstairs

If you ever visited the Farm Service Agency County Office in Hilo you know it is a busy and confined space. Recently, the work space was reconfigured to better serve customers and accommodate the employees, equipment and records. Now when you visit the Federal Building on Waianuenue Avenue, you will find Farm Loans upstairs in Room 219 and Farm Programs handling disasters assistance and other programs downstairs in Room 122. On either floor of the building, you will find the same friendly employees eager to serve your business needs.

Telephone contacts for the Hawaii County Office include Farm Loans at 933-8368 and Farm Programs at 933-8340.

### Farm Bill Website

For the latest on 2014 Farm Bill Programs administered by the Farm Service Agency, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/farmbill](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/farmbill).



Punachicks Farm owners Emily and Yoric Taaroa and their daughters.

## Punachicks Farm - Today

Since the last Punachicks Farm article published in the August 2014 Farm Service Agency’s (FSA) Newsletter, Punachicks Farm owners Emily and Yoric Taaroa continue to expand their operation.

Ten months ago, their operation was at 280 broiler chickens per month. Today they are producing 500 a month!

The Taaroa’s applied for and were awarded a [Value Added Producer Grant](#) (VAPG) through the United States Department of Agriculture’s Rural Development. The VAPG program supports planning activities, such as developing a business plan, as well as working capital. Specific funds are available for projects that focus on local and regional supply networks or support beginning farmers and ranchers, minority farmers and ranchers, and small or medium-sized farms or ranches.

The VAPG funding allowed Punachicks Farm to update their logo and increase their processing frequency by hiring extra help. The funds are also being used to help expand their markets by aiding with distribution costs, which includes delivery fees and boxes, furthering their brand. They have also begun shipping to the North Shore on Oahu, supplying a niche butcher shop specializing in gourmet and organic meats.

Punachicks’ operation had some minor damage from Hurricane Iselle, but sales were mainly affected since their steady customers did not have refrigeration and therefore chickens some chickens had to be sold at a loss, but they have recouped since then.

If you follow Punachicks on Facebook, you will know they recently acquired more equipment and additional customers after another known commercial chicken

supplier, Fox Forest Farm, closed. Fox Forest Farm owners were a source of knowledge and mentorship when Punachicks Farm began its operation.

Punachicks Farm is excited and ready to take on the next step, purchasing farm land with a FSA Farm Ownership Loan.

## Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

Are you a beginning farmer or rancher or know someone who wants to learn more about how to get started in agriculture? The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has a website designed to meet those needs at [www.USDA.gov/newfarmers](http://www.USDA.gov/newfarmers).

The new farmer and rancher website offers guidance on issues identified as top priorities to get started in agriculture, such as:

- How to access land and capital
- Building new market opportunities
- Participating in conservation opportunities
- How to select and use the right risk management tools
- Access to USDA education and technical support programs

The website also features case studies about beginning farmers who have successfully utilized USDA resources to start or expand their business operations.

## Loans for Long Term Disaster Recovery

Financial support is still available for producers in Guam, American Samoa and the counties of Hawaii and Maui who were struck by storms last year even though deadlines have passed for the Emergency Loan Program.

Recognizing that economic recovery after a disaster can be a long-term process, Farm Service Agency’s (FSA) Farm Loan Officers are available to walk producers through a number of loan options to best suit each individual business’ needs. Contact your FSA County Office for an appointment.

Interest Rates for May 2015	
Farm Operating Loans - Direct	2.50 %
MicroLoans	2.50 %
Farm Ownership Loans - Direct	3.625 %
Farm Ownership Loans Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50 %
Emergency Loans	3.50 %

## Beginning Producer Loans

Farm Service Agency (FSA) assists beginning farmers and ranchers with direct or guaranteed loans to finance agricultural enterprises. A beginning producer is defined by FSA 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; and
- 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 by making an appointment with your local FSA County Office or by visiting: [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).



## Recipe for Breakfast Taro

*Hawaii County Committee Member Aileen Yeh shares one of her favorite recipes for taro.*

Select the amount of taro corms desired. Chinese taro is a good choice for this recipe.

Boil the taro corms until a knife passes easily through. Pour off water from taro and allow to cool before peeling the outer skin off the taro. Allow to cool further then grate the taro over a bowl.

Mix in enough milk or cream to create a moldable texture, and add enough sugar to make it slightly sweet, if desired.

On a sheet of plastic wrap or foil, roll the mixture into a log about 2.5 to 3 inches in diameter and about 8 inches long. Wrap in the plastic wrap, and add an outer wrap

of foil to hold the shape.

Refrigerate overnight or until cold. Slice into patties, and fry in butter until crisp and browned, and serve. If there are leftovers, keep refrigerated or freeze.

Enjoy!

## Filing a Notice of Loss

The CCC-576, Notice of Loss, is used to report failed acreage and prevented planting and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. Timely filing a Notice of Loss is required for all crops including grasses. For losses on crops covered by the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program and crop insurance, you must file a CCC-576, Notice of Loss must be filed in the FSA County Office within 12 hours for hand-harvested crops and within 15 days for all other crops following the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent.

If filing for prevented planting, an acreage report and CCC-576 must be filed within 15 calendar days of the final planting date for the crop.

### Dates to Remember

June 1, 2015	Conservation Compliance Deadline
September 30, 2015	Deadline for Hawaii, Maui and Honolulu producers to apply for an Emergency Physical Loss Loan due to high winds and flooding in January 2015
November 4, 2015	Deadline for Hawaii County producers to apply for Emergency Loans due to impact from lava flows
Continuous	Hawaii 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).