



# Hawaii & Pacific Basin NEWSLETTER

March 2015



Your Farm Service Agency Online Monthly Newsletter Covering the Latest Topics

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## **Bavi Hits Guam and the Mariana Islands**

Agricultural producers negatively impacted by Tropical Storm Bavi may be eligible for disaster assistance through the Farm Service Agency (FSA) if they are signed up for the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and file a Notice of Loss (CCC-576) within 72 hours for hand-harvested crops under the new provisions of the 2014 Farm Bill.

The Notice of Loss form is used to report failed acreage and may be completed by any producer with an interest in the crop. Timely filing of a Notice of Loss within 72 hours for hand-harvested crops and within 15 days for all other crops including grasses is required following the occurrence of a disaster or when losses become apparent. Producers may file a Notice of Loss with the FSA County Office by email, fax or phone.

For more information or to file a Notice of Loss, call the FSA Guam County Office at (671) 472-7568. Producers in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands may dial toll free (670) 234-0896.

## **Emergency Loans Available Due to Lava Flows**

An amendment to an existing Presidential Disaster Declaration for lava flows from Kilauea Volcano recently triggered the availability of Farm Service Agency (FSA) Emergency Loans.

Commercial agricultural producers on Hawaii Island, who were negatively impacted by the volcanic eruption and lava flows, may be eligible to borrow up to 100

percent of actual production or physical losses to a maximum amount of \$500,000 at a low interest rate. The 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 November 4, 2015.

For more information about Emergency Loans, please contact the FSA Hawaii County Office at 933-8368 for an appointment or visit the FSA's website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/hi](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/hi).

## **Loans Available Following Multiple Disasters**

Producers facing economic hardship or challenges in rebuilding or replanting due to any of the numerous storms that took place in Hawaii or the Pacific Basin or recent lava flows since last summer may want to visit with a Farm Service Agency (FSA) loan officer to learn more about what Emergency Loans are available. Key deadlines to apply for Emergency Loans are:

**May 11, 2015** – Cyclone Halong in Guam

**May 11, 2015** – Rains, flooding and landslides which occurred in July 2014 in American Samoa

**May 12, 2015** – Hurricane Iselle in Hawaii and Maui counties

**September 30, 2015** – High winds and flooding which occurred in January 2015 in Hawaii, Maui and Honolulu counties

**November 4, 2015** – Lava flows in Hawaii County

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<b>Honolulu County Farm Service Agency Office</b>	
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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 10 at 8:30 am</p> <p><u>Honolulu County</u> - April 17 at 3:00 pm</p> <p><u>Kauai County</u> - April 15 at 8:30 am</p> <p><u>Maui County</u> - April 16 at 9:00 am</p> <p><u>Guam County</u> - April 8 at 9:00 am</p> <p><u>CNMI County</u> - April 8 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>	

## Hawaii Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program - Plant Trees!

A Chinese proverb states, “The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.” The Hawaii Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is in its sixth year and applications are being accepted for proposed projects throughout the state of Hawaii. This partnership between the Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the State of Hawaii Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) provides financial incentives and technical assistance to help restore forested, previously forested, degraded, or cropped agricultural land.

The environmental goals of Hawaii CREP are to use tree plantings and native riparian buffers to reduce sediment and nutrient runoff, increase coral reef cover and health, improve wildlife and plant habitats for Hawaii’s threatened and endangered native species, increase groundwater recharge and reduce invasive species.

Landowners and lessees may be eligible to enroll land into the program if they have owned or leased the land for at least one year; the land is physically and legally capable of agricultural production; and they meet the adjusted gross income limitation of \$900,000. Once enrolled, landowners are asked to commit to a 15 year contract to implement conservation practices, maintain their plantings and refrain from harvesting. Financial incentives include a signing incentive payment, annual per acre rental payments, and cost share for approved practices. Common practices include invasive species control, fencing to exclude ungulates, site preparation, native tree planting, hardwood tree planting and native understory planting.

Interested farmers, ranchers, and landowners may contact their local FSA, NRCS, or DOFAW office. Act now, and plant some trees!



This landscape is a good candidate for a Hawaii CREP project.  
Photo Credit: DOFAW



This example of a healthy reforestation project reflects a mix of koa and ohia trees. Next steps may include out planting of native understory plants.  
Photo Credit: JB Friday

## March 31st Deadline for Wind Damage Relief

Farmers and ranchers in the counties of Hawaii and Honolulu who suffered damages from severe winds on January 2-3, 2015 may be eligible for assistance under the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

Criteria for damages include:

- It is so costly to rehabilitate that Federal assistance is required to return the land to productive agricultural use
- Is unusual in character and is not the type that would recur frequently in the same area
- Materially affects the productive capacity of the farmland
- Impairs or endangers the land if not treated

A producer qualifying under ECP may receive cost share assistance up to 75 percent of the eligible cost of restoration measures, with no producer eligible to receive more than \$200,000 per natural disaster occurrence. The following types of practices may be eligible for cost share assistance:

- Removing debris from farmland
- Grading, shaping, or re-leveling severely damaged farmland
- Restoring permanent fences
- Restoring conservation structures

To be eligible for assistance, practices may not be started until all of the following are met:

- An application for cost-share assistance has been filed (Form FSA-848, Cost Share Request)
- Onsite inspection of the damaged area has been completed by FSA
- The agency responsible for technical assistance, such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has made a determination of need

Producers who suffered a qualifying loss from this natural disaster may sign up for ECP now through March 31, 2015. The FSA Honolulu County Office will take ECP applications for both Hawaii and Honolulu county producers. Call 808-483-8600, extension 2 for an appointment.

### 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).

## Informational Workshops for Emergency Conservation Program

Wednesday, March 25, 2015 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Pahala Community Center – Hawaii Island

Thursday, March 26, 2015 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Pahoa Community Center – Hawaii Island

Producers impacted by severe winds in January can learn more about cost share benefits and sign up for the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP).

Producers impacted by Hurricane Iselle who signed up for ECP can receive assistance with required forms, records and paperwork.

For information, call 808-483-8600, ext. 140



Outgoing Maui County Committee Member Lynn DeCoite second from the left is flanked by members Paul Lopes and Brian Otani and County Executive Director James Robello on the far right. Photo Credit: Rochelle Kaauamo

## Farm Service Agency Employees in Transition

Farm Service Agency (FSA) Hawaii and Pacific Basin is composed of a small staff. So when someone takes a new job or extended leave the proverbial dominos begin to realign, and that situation has been occurring as of late at FSA. Let us take a quick look at some of the changes you will likely see when visiting a County Office.

**Representative Lynn DeCoite** – Long time FSA Maui County Committee Member and Chairperson, Lynn DeCoite recently resigned her seat following her appointment by Hawaii Governor David Ige to serve in the Hawaii State House of Representatives. In her letter of resignation, Lynn stated, “I have thoroughly enjoyed my time on the [FSA] committee connecting with other local agriculture producers, and helping make decisions

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on FSA disaster, conservation, and commodity and price support programs. I know this committee is an invaluable tool for the agriculture community.” Lynn’s strong leadership will be missed at FSA, but her new work in statewide policy development will surely bring added benefits to Hawaii’s agricultural communities. Best wishes are extended to Lynn.

**New County Committee Representation** – Jim Schelinski of Molokai will step up from the role of an alternate committee member to the FSA Maui County Committee and serve out the balance of Lynn DeCoite’s term which ends on December 31, 2016. Jim is a hydroponic farmer from Maunaloa, Molokai. He also grows dragon fruit and is part owner of an Axis deer farm. The Maui County Committee and staff are looking forward to working closely with Jim in the months ahead.

**Deputy Tamashiro** – Last month Maui Farm Loan Manager John Tamashiro departed for FSA’s headquarters in Washington DC to take a new job as the Agency’s Deputy of the Loan Making Division.

Hawaii born and raised, John has worked for FSA for nearly eight years and over that time period he directly engaged with all six of the Hawaii and Pacific Basin county offices. Since, transferring to the Nation’s Capital, he noted there was at least one “crazy” day thus far; his skin has turned super dry; and that the town pretty much shuts down during a big snow storm. Hawaii and Pacific Basin look forward to John’s continued leadership from afar.



John Tamashiro in his new office at FSA headquarters in Washington D.C. Courtesy Photo.

**Terri Climbs the Ladder** – Theresa ‘Terri’ Correa began her career with FSA years ago as an entry level Program Assistant on Maui. In subsequent steps up the career ladder, she played a significant role in training numerous employees from managers to loan officers to program technicians in the myriad of loan program details and supported county offices in Honolulu, Kauai and American Samoa and took detail assignments as needed throughout the region. Terri summed up her work as, “It is so satisfying to be able to help a producer build a viable business. Talking finances is very intimate and it’s a great feeling when you can

relate to a producer and build trust. It’s also a great feeling to go to the market and farmer’s markets and see our farmers with their products for sale, knowing that you not only helped a farmer but play a small part in helping the community as well.”

Terri is now climbing even higher on the career ladder, as later this month when she leaves Hawaii to start work in FSA’s headquarters as a Senior Loan Officer of the Direct Loan Servicing Branch, Loan Servicing and Property Management Division. She says she is excited about the new work that will include some very complex and unusual situations, but she believes that the experiences gained in Hawaii will serve her well in providing a broader perspective and the ability to find creative resolutions. Terri said, “Aside from the weather and the beautiful view from my office, I will miss most the ‘Aloha’ that we all share.” Hawaii and Pacific Basin say Aloha, Hafa Adai and Tofa Soifua to Terri.



Theresa Correa, soon to be Senior Loan Officer for the Direct Loan Servicing Branch in Washington D.C. Courtesy Photo.

**Virtually Miki** – Miki Miyasato has been a stalwart service provider in the field of agricultural financing for over 20 years. Working primarily with producers on Hawaii Island, she began her career with Farm Credit Services of Hawaii and then took a position with FSA. Over the course of the next 13 years, she served as loan officer and manager, trainer and reviewer working directly with each FSA county office. Miki says the great thing about her work is, “It is always about the people; those who work and live to keep agriculture on our islands alive and growing.”



Miki Miyasato  
Courtesy Photo.

Later this month, Miki will take on a new role as a Program Specialist with the FSA State Office. The position is normally based in Honolulu, but Miki will remain in Hilo and continue to provide great service to an expanded customer base – she will just be accomplishing her work virtually.

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**New Mom** – Melissa Rodrigues, Honolulu and Kauai County Farm Loan Manager, took maternity leave the day before her second child Luca was born on February 12<sup>th</sup>. He weighed in at 6.5 pounds and is doing great, as is mom and the rest of the family. Melissa reports that Luca loves to cuddle; sleep on dad's chest; and listen to big sister, Amelia, sing her ABC's!



Luca and big sister Amelia share a warm moment.  
Photo Credit: Jose Rodrigues

### Interest Rates for March 2015

Farm Operating Loans	2.50 %
MicroLoans	2.50 %
Farm Ownership Loans	3.50 %
Farm Ownership Loans Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50 %
Emergency Loans	3.50 %

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## Acreage Reporting Dates

In order to comply with Farm Service Agency (FSA) program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to make an appointment with their FSA County Office to file an accurate crop certification report by the following deadlines:

March 31	All other noninsurable crops covered by Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program not listed in this table. Acreage reporting date is by March 31 of the subsequent crop year.
May 31	Nursery for the ensuing crop year
July 15	Banana, Papaya, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
September 30	Aquaculture, Floriculture, Ginseng, Mushrooms, Turfgrass Sod for the ensuing year
December 16	Grazed Forage - 15 days before the onset of grazing
January 2	Honey - for crop year 2016
March 15	Coffee - for 2016

If a producer acquires additional acreage after the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office. For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact your local FSA County Office.

### Dates to Remember

March 31, 2015	Deadline to apply for Emergency Conservation Program due to high winds in Hawaii and Honolulu Counties
May 11, 2015	Deadline for American Samoa & Guam producers to apply for Emergency Loans due to flooding and Tropical Storm Halong
May 12, 2015	Deadline for Hawaii & Maui County producers to apply for Emergency Loans due to impacts of Hurricane Iselle