

May 2020



Farm Service Agency **Electronic News Service**

NEWSLETTER

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SED's Comments

Aloha, Talofa, and Hafa Adai

We know farmers are resilient and the Farm Service Agency will continue to deliver the disaster assistance, safety net, farm loan and conservation programs that keep American agriculture in business today and long into the future.

On March 27, 2020, President Trump signed into law the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act. This legislation includes \$48.9 billion for USDA agencies and the Food and Drug Administration to continue to respond to the coronavirus pandemic.

The CARES Act contains \$9.5 billion in assistance for agriculture producers who have been impacted by COVID-19 along with a \$14 billion replenishment to the Commodity Credit Corporation. In addition, the legislation includes \$100 million in ReConnect grants to expand access to broadband in rural America for educational purposes, business, and access to critical telehealth services.

We are swiftly evaluating the authorities granted under the CARES Act and will leverage our programs to alleviate disruption as necessary. For the latest updates on the CARES Act, and other Frequently Asked Questions, visit usda.gov/coronavirus.

USDA is actively monitoring all agriculture commodity markets during the COVID-19 National Emergency. The U.S. food supply chain remains safe and secure and we are committed to ensuring America's farmers, ranchers, and producers get through this pandemic.

Our USDA Service Centers in Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa and CNMI will continue to be open for business by phone appointment only and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. While our program delivery staff will continue to come into the office, they will be working with our producers by phone and using online tools whenever possible. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the Farm Service Agency are required to call their Service Center to schedule a phone appointment.

I also encourage you to visit farmers.gov/coronavirus to keep up-to-date on temporary program flexibilities available as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

AL Frenzel, State Executive Director
USDA Farm Service Agency Hawaii & Pacific Basin

Hawaii & Pacific Basin FSA State Office

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Honolulu, HI 96850

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FAX: 855-356-9493

State Executive Director:
AL Frenzel

Chief Program Specialist:
Patrick Lewis

Chief, Farm Loan Program:
Theresa Correa

Upcoming County Committee Meetings:

Hawaii County Committee
July 10, 2020 at 8:30 am

Honolulu County Committee
May 15, 2020 at 3:00 pm

Maui County Committee
May 21, 2020 at 8:30 am

Kauai County Committee
May 20, 2020 at 9:00 am

Guam County Committee
July 14, 2020 at 10:00 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](#)

FSA Reminds Producers of Ongoing Disaster Assistance Program Signup

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has started making payments through the Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program – Plus (WHIP+) to agricultural producers who suffered eligible losses because of drought or excess moisture in 2018 and 2019. Signup for these causes of loss opened March 23, and producers who suffered losses from drought (in counties designated D3 or above), excess moisture, hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, typhoons, volcanic activity, snowstorms or wildfires can still apply for assistance through WHIP+.

To be eligible for WHIP+, producers must have suffered losses of certain crops, trees, bushes or vines in counties with a Presidential Emergency Disaster Declaration or a Secretarial Disaster Designation (primary counties only) for qualifying natural disaster events that occurred in calendar years 2018 or 2019. Also, losses located in a county not designated by the Secretary as a primary county may be eligible if a producer provides documentation showing that the loss was due to a qualifying natural disaster event.

For losses due to drought, a producer is eligible if any area of the county in which the loss occurred was rated D3, or extreme drought, or higher on the U.S. Drought Monitor during calendar years 2018 or 2019. Producers who suffered losses should contact their FSA county office.

In addition to the recently added eligible losses of drought and excess moisture, FSA will implement a WHIP+ provision for crop quality loss that resulted in price deductions or penalties when marketing crops damaged by eligible disaster events. To ensure an effective program for all impacted farmers, the Agency is currently gathering information on the extent of quality loss from producers and stakeholder organizations.

addresses. (<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Hawaii/service-centers/index>)

Website for Hawaii and Pacific Basin FSA:

www.fsa.usda.gov/hi

USDA Service Centers, including FSA county offices, are open for business by phone only, and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. While program delivery staff will continue to come into the office, they will be working with producers by phone and using online tools whenever possible. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service or any other Service Center agency are required to call their Service Center to schedule a phone appointment. More information on Service Centers can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus, and more information on WHIP+ can be found at farmers.gov/whip-plus.

USDA Announces Grants for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced the availability of \$3 million for grants through its new Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production. The competitive grants will support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production projects through two categories, Planning Projects and Implementation Projects. USDA will accept applications on Grants.gov until midnight July 6, 2020.

Planning Projects

\$1 million is available for Planning Projects that initiate or expand efforts of farmers, gardeners, citizens, government officials, schools, and other stakeholders in urban areas and suburbs. Projects may target areas of food access; education; business and start-up costs for new farmers; and development of policies related to zoning and other needs of urban production.

Implementation Projects

\$2 million is available for Implementation Projects that accelerate existing and emerging models of urban, indoor, and other agricultural practices that serve multiple farmers. Projects will improve local food access and collaborate with partner organizations and may support infrastructure needs; emerging technologies; educational endeavors; and urban farming policy development.

Webinar

A webinar will be held on June 3, 2020 from 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time. The webinar will provide an overview of the grants' purpose, project types, eligibility, and basic requirements for the submission of an application. Information on how participate in the webinar, or listen to the recording, will be posted on the farmers.gov/urban webpage.

More Information

The Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Technology was established through the 2018 Farm Bill.

Applications must be submitted through Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on July 6, 2020.

More information is available at farmers.gov/urban.

For more information or to apply for Urban Agriculture Innovative grants, contact your local FSA county office or visit [<link>](#). To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-locator.

USDA Accepting Proposals for State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement Initiative

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is now accepting new or modified proposals from state governments for its State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Initiative. Through SAFE, vital habitat is restored to meet high-priority state wildlife conservation goals. The deadline to submit proposals is June 19.

SAFE practices must be used to restore animal habitats for the following categories:

- rare, threatened and endangered species
- species that have suffered a significant population decline
- species that provide significant social or economic value to the community.

SAFE grass and tree practices were moved to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) General Signup in 2019 and competed against other offers, while buffer and wetland practices remain under continuous CRP signup.

When submitted, proposals must include an overview of the project accomplishments, a list of all practices planned, the commitment of the state and participants and the planned outreach efforts.

For more information about SAFE and submitting a proposal, contact your FSA state office at 808-541-2600 ext 2.

Report Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Losses

The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters including freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind or hurricanes, flood, excessive heat and qualifying drought (includes native grass for grazing), among others.

Eligible producers must have purchased NAP coverage for 2020 crops. A notice of loss must be filed the earlier of 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent or 15 days of the final harvest date.

Producers of hand-harvested crops and certain perishable crops must notify FSA within 72 hours of when a loss becomes apparent.

Eligible crops must be commercially produced agricultural commodities for which crop insurance is not available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

For more information on NAP, contact your local FSA office or visit fsa.usda.gov/nap.

Supervised Credit

Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan programs are considered supervised credit. Unlike loans from a commercial lender, FSA loans are intended to be temporary in nature. Therefore, it is our goal to help you graduate to commercial credit, and our farm loan staff is available to help borrowers through training and credit counseling.

The FSA team will help borrowers identify their goals to ensure financial success. Through this process, FSA staff will advise borrowers in developing strategies and a plan to meet your operation's goals and graduate to commercial credit. Ultimately, the borrower is responsible for the success of the farming operation, but FSA's staff will help in an advisory role to provide the tools necessary to help you achieve your operational goals and manage your finances.

For more information on FSA farm loan programs, visit fsa.usda.gov.

May 2020 Interest Rates

Farm Operating Loans 1.75%
Farm Operating Microloans 1.75%
Farm Ownership Loans 2.625%
Farm Ownership Microloans 2.625%
Farm Ownership Loans Direct Down Payment for Beginning Farmer or Rancher 1.5%
Emergency Loans 2.75%

Sign Up Today for Text Alerts from FSA

Subscribers Can Receive Important Program Reminders and Updates

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) farmers and ranchers now can receive notifications from their county office through text messages on their cell phone.

Whether producers are in the field, on a tractor or even on horseback, this service enables FSA customers and stakeholders to receive notifications while on the go. Producers will receive text messages regarding important program deadlines, reporting requirements, outreach events and updates.

Producers can text the **short codes** below to FSANOW (372-669) to subscribe to text message alerts from their respective counties. Standard text messaging rates apply. Contact your wireless carrier for details associated with your particular data plan. Participants may unsubscribe at any time.

Hawaii County : **HPBHawaii**
Honolulu County: **HPBHonolulu**
Kauai County: **HPBKauai**
Maui County: **HPBMaui**

Please contact your [local FSA office](#) if you have questions regarding FSA's email news service or the text message option.

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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).
