



NEWS RELEASE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE - FARM SERVICE AGENCY

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LaTawnya Dia
202-720-7962
LaTawnya.Dia@wdc.usda.gov

USDA Designates Hawaii County in Hawaii as a Primary Natural Disaster Area

WASHINGTON, Jan. 19, 2012 — The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has designated Hawaii County in Hawaii as a primary natural disaster area due to losses caused by drought that occurred from Jan. 1, 2011, and continues.

"Farmers and ranchers in Hawaii County have experienced severe drought conditions this past year," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "President Obama and I realize that during this time of disaster, federal assistance will be needed until conditions improve, as producers strive to recover their losses."

Hawaii County was designated a natural disaster area on Jan. 18, 2012, making all qualified farm operators in the designated area eligible for low interest emergency (EM) loans from USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers in the eligible county have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. FSA has a variety of programs, in addition to the EM loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity.

USDA also has made other programs available to assist farmers and ranchers, including the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE), which was approved as part of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008; the Emergency Conservation Program; Federal Crop Insurance; and the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program. Interested farmers may contact their local USDA Service Centers for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs. Additional information is also available online at <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>.

Secretary Vilsack also reminds producers that the department's authority to operate the five disaster assistance programs authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill expired on Sept. 30, 2011. This includes SURE; the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP); the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP); the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP); and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP). Production losses in the counties listed above are covered because the event triggering the loss occurred prior to the expiration of these programs; however, production losses due to disasters occurring after Sept. 30, 2011, are not eligible for disaster program coverage.

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