

Dan Inouye

U.S. SENATOR FROM HAWAII



INOUYE ANNOUNCES AGRICULTURAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE FOR HAWAII FARMERS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON --- Senate Appropriations Chairman Daniel K. Inouye announced today that as a result of a provision he added to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), Hawaii agricultural producers will receive financial assistance for losses resulting from natural disasters, including drought, flooding, vog and varroa mites in 2008.

Federal assistance programs for tropical agriculture producers are very limited since these programs were mainly designed for mainland agricultural conditions and practices. "I am pleased my colleagues agreed that losses suffered by Hawaii growers in 2008 were especially severe," said Chairman Inouye. "It is important that federal agricultural disaster assistance programs be more flexible to adequately address these losses."

Even with legislation, disaster assistance for Hawaii producers is not automatic. Eligible producers who wish to become eligible must provide documentation of the losses incurred and pay a "buy-in" fee through the transitional disaster assistance program which was enacted in 2008. The ARRA stimulus bill provision extends the sign-up period to mid-May, 2009. "I encourage all Hawaii growers who have incurred losses in 2008 to sign up immediately by contacting the Farm Service Agency in their county," Inouye stated.

A contact list is set forth below:

COUNTY	PHONE	FAX	EMAIL
Hawaii	(808) 933-8341	(808) 933-8345	lester.ueda@hi.usda.gov
Honolulu	(808) 483-8600	(808) 483-8615	jason.shitanishi@hi.usda.gov
Kauai	(808) 245-9014	(808) 246-4639	robert.ishikawa@hi.usda.gov
Maui	(808) 871-5500	(808) 873-6183	james.robello@hi.usda.gov