

Dan Inouye

U.S. SENATOR FROM HAWAII



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INOUYE MEETS WITH SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE TO DISCUSS HAWAII ISSUES

Thursday, May 7, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON --- U.S. Senator Daniel K. Inouye recently met with Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack to discuss a wide range of agricultural issues affecting Hawaii. Jim Miller, Under Secretary, Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services, was also in attendance.

Senator Inouye discussed his concern for natural disasters assistance to producers who incurred losses due to drought, flooding and volcanic emission damage disasters last year. These disasters exacerbate an agricultural sector in Hawaii that is undergoing major changes with large-scale plantation agriculture (sugarcane and pineapple) and smaller-scale, more diversified operations. Much of the federal disaster assistance provisions administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture are directed to temperate zone agriculture and tend not to “fit” the tropical agriculture operations as practice in Hawaii.

“Although the details are still being worked out, I received assurances from the Secretary that Hawaii’s unique agriculture challenges will be addressed,” said Inouye. “Federal assistance provides monetary support, but it also provides hope and time for our producers to recover from natural disasters during this challenging economy.”

Inouye also appealed to local agriculture, “I hope Hawaii growers who have incurred losses in 2008 will sign up immediately for federal assistance by contacting the Farm Serving Agency in their county. Eligible producers who wish to become eligible must provide documentation of the losses incurred and pay a buy-in fee by May 18, 2009 to qualify for the supplemental disaster assistance program enacted in 2008.”

Below is the Farm Serving Agency contact list:

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