Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Announces Increased Opportunity for Producers as part of New Farm Bill

Farm Loan Program Modifications Create Flexibility for New and Existing Farmers and Ranchers Alike

WASHINGTON, March 24, 2014 — Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced increased opportunity for producers as a result of the 2014 Farm Bill. A fact sheet outlining modifications to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan Programs is available.

"Our nation's farmers and ranchers are the engine of the rural economy. These improvements to our Farm Loan Programs will help a new generation begin farming and grow existing farm operations," said Secretary Vilsack. "Today's announcement represents just one part of a series of investments the new Farm Bill makes in the next generation of agriculture, which is critical to economic growth in communities across the country."

The Farm Bill expands lending opportunities for thousands of farmers and ranchers to begin and continue operations, including greater flexibility in determining eligibility, raising loan limits, and emphasizing beginning and socially disadvantaged producers.

Changes that will take effect immediately include:

- Elimination of loan term limits for guaranteed operating loans.
- Modification of the definition of beginning farmer, using the average farm size for the county as a qualifier instead of the median farm size.
- Modification of the Joint Financing Direct Farm Ownership Interest Rate to 2 percent less than regular Direct Farm Ownership rate, with a floor of 2.5 percent. Previously, the rate was established at 5 percent.
- Increase of the maximum loan amount for Direct Farm Ownership down payments from $225,000 to $300,000.
- Elimination of rural residency requirement for Youth Loans, allowing urban youth to benefit.
- Debt forgiveness on Youth Loans, which will not prevent borrowers from obtaining additional loans from the federal government.
- Increase of the guarantee amount on Conservation Loans from 75 to 80 percent and 90 percent for socially disadvantaged borrowers and beginning farmers.
- Microloans will not count toward loan term limits for veterans and beginning farmers.

Additional modifications must be implemented through the rulemaking processes. Visit the FSA Farm Bill website for detailed information and updates to farm loan programs.
College of Agriculture and Food Sciences (CAFS ) Spring Convocation and Extension Centennial Celebration Lecture Series

Tallahassee, FL- On February 28, 2014, at the FAMU Teleconference Center, CAFS celebrated its 2014 Spring Convocation in commemorating with the centennial celebration of the Smith-Lever Act of 1914. Dr. Dana Chandler, world-renowned University Historian at Tuskegee University was the speaker of the hour, addressing the history (fact and fiction) on Dr. George Washington Carver.

Dr. Chandler’s Speech, entitled “George Washington Carver: The Nation’s First African-American Green Scientist” addressed some well known facts and fiction surrounding the teachings, research and legacy of Mr. Carver.

We thank Dr. Chandler, all program participants and attendees.

Dr. Dana Chandler, University Historian
Tuskegee University

Dr. Ray Mobley, Director of Veterinary Sciences

Dr. Robert Taylor, Dean of CAFS and Director of Land Grant Programs

Dr. Lawrence Carter, Director of Special Outreach Activities

CAFS student, Ryan Kornegay

Dr. Fred Gainous, former FAMU President and CAFS Professor

Audience members listen to Dr. Chandler during his presentation
JUMPING INTO SPRING: GROWING INSTRUCTIONS FOR HOT PEPPERS

So its spring time and you have decided that you are going to make some money on the hot pepper market or on a smaller scale, grow some of those ‘spicy’ devils for personal consumption. As a beginner, you have decided to:

* Grow about 0.33 acres of Scotch Bonet hot pepper for sale OR grow about 30 potted hot pepper plants in 2 gallon pots
* Make some delicious hot pepper jellies
* Pickle some hot peppers for future use
* Experiment with various types of hot sauce
* Experiment with making that famous Caribbean jerk seasoning
* Experiment with some Caribbean recipes like curried goat and chicken

But alas! You have no idea how to grow hot peppers. Well here’s the good news: whether you are interested in growing hot peppers commercially or simply as a hobby, the procedures for growing the plants are similar. The only difference is in the scale of your project. Here are some basic guidelines for growing the plants in small garden plots or in 2 – gallon pots if garden space is a limitation.

Site selection: First of all, the statement that hot peppers should only be grown in ‘full sunlight’ is only partially true. Although a nice well drained sunny area is preferable, hot peppers can tolerate up to 35 % shade and still grow well. In fact, some of our better yields came from controlled experiments with 25 % shade. Bear in mind however, that shade reduces the time to fruit formation.

Tools & Equipment: Tools and equipment include: rotary tillers, garden rakes, garden hoes, shovels, hand spades, watering hoses, sprinklers, a complete fertilizer such as a 10:10:10 compound fertilizer, and a roll of string for lining out your plots and planting in straight rows. For container gardens, you will need potting soil or mushroom compost, and 2 or 3 gallon pots. You may consider getting your soil tested at one of the local agricultural extension offices before deciding on a fertilizer plan. Furthermore, after a soil test, you may find that fertilizer is not a requirement at all for your first crop. For outdoor gardens less than 0.5 acres, small rotary tillers are a great choice for initial land preparation. However, these can cost up to $3000.00. My number one choice is a garden fork to break and invert the soil, followed by a garden hoe to break the clods. This combination of tools does a great job on small plots (approximately 20 ft. x 20 ft.) and gives you a great workout. A WORD OF CAUTION! If you have never used a garden fork before, PLEASE ask for a demonstration. The spikes can cost you a leg or even your life if you drive them into your foot instead of the ground.

PLANTING AND SPACING

Outdoor gardens: Raised beds (approximately 12 to 18 inches from ground level) are preferable. However, if flooding is not an issue, you may simply break and pulverize the soil, establish your plot boundaries with your lining material then you are ready to plant. Make holes about 3 to 4 inches deep with spaces of 2ft. to 3 ft. apart. Pull the soil around the roots and press or tap lightly to ensure that the entire root of the plant is buried and that the plants are firmly in the ground.

Potted plants: With proper care, hot peppers do just as well in potted plants as they do outdoors. However, there are several areas of concern to be addressed: by adhering to these guidelines, you should be able to grow potted hot peppers successfully:

1. Use pots that provide sufficient space for root development. Two or 3 gallon pots are perfect. Smaller pots can be used but can have conflicting results.
2. Ensure that the pots allow excess water to drain and air to circulate freely.
3. Ensure that the potting medium is free of weed seeds and in the case of mushroom compost, fully cured. Heat from uncured compost will kill your plants.
4. Place your potted plants in an area where they will receive at least 4 to 5 hours of full sunlight. Areas of total darkness are strictly forbidden. Do not place on back porches where the plants are exposed to the merciless heat of the afternoon sun, or are unable to receive light cooling breezes and cooling rain showers. This is perhaps the number one reason why many potted plants fail.

The information provided in this article will help you get on your way to becoming a successful hot pepper grower and to produce hot peppers for personal use. However, due to space limitations, important information on after care, such as mitigating the threat of pests and diseases has been omitted. This information will be provided in a subsequent issue. The timing will be perfect since by then, your plants should be either blooming or even producing fruit. Hopefully you will have no problems from pests or diseases. If you need additional information on growing hot peppers, please contact the author. Best of luck with your spring garden!
Scented geranium plants are a sensual delight in any home or garden. Their varied and textured leaves, the bright colors of their flowers, the scented oils they produce and the flavor they can add to food and drinks appeal to almost all of our senses.

Scented geranium plants are not true geraniums, but members of the Pelargonium genus and are considered to be tender perennials. In colder regions of the United States they are treated as annuals.

Scented geranium originated in Africa and was brought to Holland by early explorers. From Holland, the popular houseplant migrated to England in the 1600s. They were preferred during the Victorian era when the fragrant leaves were added to fingerbowlis for guest to rinse their hands between courses at dinner.

There are now over a hundred varieties with different shaped and textured leaves, flower colors and aromas; mint, rose, citrus and chocolate is a few of the more popular scents available. Unlike other garden plants that are fragrant only when blooming, scented geraniums are fragranced all year long.

Caring for scented geranium is very easy; they can be grown in pots, indoors or out, or in the ground. They prefer a sunny location, but may need some protection when the sun is at its strongest. They will thrive in just about any soil type as long as it drains well.

Fertilize them lightly and cautiously while they're actively growing. Scented geranium’s biggest downside is they tend to get leggy and need to be trimmed back to promote bushiness. Over fertilization will only increase this problem. Before the first frost, dig up your plants and bring them indoors or take cuttings for winter growing. Keep them in a sunny window, water regularly and fertilize sparingly.

Whether in containers or in the ground, grow scented geraniums where they will be touched as the leaves need to be brushed or crushed to release the aromatic oils which are located in the glands at the base of their leaf hairs. Not only do they offer fragrant leaves, lovely flowers and exquisite scent, they’re edible! The leaves can be used to flavor teas, jellies, or baked goods and the aroma therapy is free for the taking. So remember to stop and smell the scented geranium.
“Did You Know ?” trivia facts can be found on our FAMU Extension Facebook page. Also, follow us on Twitter @FamuExt

FAMU FARM FEST 2014
SPRINGTIME
AGRI-SHOWCASE

Saturday, June 7, 2014
9am-3pm
FAMU Research & Extension Center
4259 Bainbridge Highway
Quincy, Florida 32352

www.famu.edu/cep

Educational Demonstrations & Presentations
Exhibits
Tours * Health Expo* Food/ Music
Entertainment for all ages

Registration:
$5– Adults- $2/kids under 18
Children 5 and under free
Early registration available

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Florida A&M University
Cooperative Extension Program
215 Perry Paige Building, South Tallahassee, FL 32307
Office: (850) 599-3546
Fax: (850) 561-2151
TDD: (850) 561-2704
Email: Extension@famu.edu

FAMU IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/EQUAL ACCESS UNIVERSITY
March 28th marked the first day of the 2014 Master Farmer’s Program. On June 7, 2014, the graduation ceremony will commence.
With the assistance of Ms. Donna Salters, FAMU Extension CRD Program and Dr. Alex Bolques, FAMU Extension/Gadsden County Extension Agent, HCDC is in the process for preparation of their small fruit and vegetable production. This project is located on the campus of the former Havana Northside High School, located in Havana, FL.
We are pleased to announce the Centennial Anniversary Crop Block Party, celebrating the 100th year anniversary of the Smith-Lever Act of 1914.

The event will take place on April 16, 2014 from 9AM to 3PM on the corner of West Osceola and Pinder Street at the FAMU/Extension Teleconference Center. The theme of the day will be...

"Agriculture Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: Feeding and Beautifying the World"

The FAMU Cooperative Extension Program faculty & staff, farmers and agricultural related businesses, including horticulture and arboriculture, will be on hand to help us share the importance of agriculture for food production and other related agricultural industries that help to improve our lives and quality of life.

Visit with our Extension Professionals, at educational tents, providing a range of agricultural and horticultural topics including: gardening, hydroponics, tree safety, landscaping, veterinary technology, farm-to-school, and more.

For more information please call the FAMU Extension Program at (850) 599-3546.
Online registration information coming soon!

Check out website: http://www.conference.ifas.ufl.edu/smallfarms/index.html

Registration Scholarship Info

Florida small farmers who cannot attend the conference due to financial hardship have the opportunity to apply for a registration scholarship. Up to a $150 value, the scholarship covers the cost of a full conference registration. Other costs associated with the conference such as travel, lodging, and incidentals are not covered under the registration scholarship and will be the responsibility of the individual.

Applications will be reviewed in the order received by a committee composed of small farm producers and university extension faculty. Priority will be given to first time conference attendees. Past winners are not eligible and all scholarship recipients must be 18 years of age or older. Scholarship recipients name and Florida County will be posted on the conference website.

The number of scholarship that can be awarded will depend on the total amount of donations received for this purpose.

Florida small farmers applying should complete the application and send by June 1 for consideration.

Applicants will be notified by June 23. Awardees will be required to complete a registration within one week of notification to confirm scholarship acceptance (by June 30).

Hosted By:
SAVE THE DATE
June 8-21, 2014
AG-DISCOVERY
Summer Program
For Teens - Ages 14-17

To apply visit:
1) http://www.aphis.usda.gov/agdiscovery/
2) www.famu.edu/herds

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University
College of Agriculture and Food Sciences
Cooperative Extension Program

For more information, please contact:

Dr. Ray Mobley at: 561-2546
Dr. Glen Wright at: 875-8573
Carmen Lyttle N’Guessan at: 412-5363
SAVE THE DATE

July 13-18, 2014

AG-TECH Century 21
Summer Enrichment Program

For Teens - Ages 13-17

Applications are being accepted.
Please visit for forms: www.famu.edu/herds

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University
College of Agriculture and Food Sciences
Cooperative Extension Program

Contact: Carmen Lyttle N’Guessan at: 412-5363
Linda Sapp at: 412-5258
Main Office (850) 599-3546

(Deadline date 5/02/2014)
The Forestry and Conservation Education (FACE) summer program runs from June 9 – 20, 2014 on Florida A&M University Campus. The program offers teenagers from Gadsden/Surrounding counties many varied field related forestry and natural sciences excursions.

- Stipend
- Fun-filled trips
- Certificate of participation

Contact: Conchita Newman
(850) 599-3440
conchita.newman@famu.edu

An intensive week long program developed to provide a better understanding of science through experiential activities in Food Science that are linked to the Sunshine Standards.

- Hands-on Experiments
- Product Development
- Educational Field Trips

Contact: Conchita Newman
(850) 599-3440
conchita.newman@famu.edu
Who Should Attend: Meat and Poultry Processors, Food Producers, Food Handlers, Food Service Personnel, Students, and Anyone interested in the safety of their food

Objectives of Course: Identify and assess food hazards, caused by physical, chemical, biological agents that may contribute or cause food borne illness

When: April 28–29, 2014 (Two Day Workshop) 8:30 am – 5:00 pm both days

Where: Florida A&M University’s Quincy Extension and Research Center Teleconference Center located @ 4259 Bainbridge Highway, Quincy, Florida

Registration: $20 students/ $60 Professionals

For more information, please contact: Call or Email,
Dr. Keawin Sarjeant (850) 599-3383 or Keawin.Sarjeant@famu.edu
Carmen Lyttle-N’guessan (850) 412-5363 or Carmen.lyttlenguessa@famu.edu
FAMU EXTENSION FACULTY/STAFF

Dr. Robert Taylor, Dean and Director of Land Grant Programs, College of Agriculture and Food Sciences (CAFS)

Vonda Richardson, Interim Director, Cooperative Extension Programs

Dr. Lawrence Carter, Director of Special Outreach Programs

Dr. Ray Mobley, Director of Veterinary Services

Dr. Jennifer Taylor, Extension Specialist– Small Farms/Sustainable Development

Tondalaya Nelson, EFNEP Interim Coordinator/4-H Youth Development Specialist

Angela McKenzie-Jakes, Extension Animal Science Specialist/Program Leader Small Ruminant Program

Carmen Lyttle-N'guessan, Coordinator, Animal Healthcare/Veterinary Technology Program (Vet-Tech)

Sandra Thompson, Community Resource Development Program Leader/ Extension Specialist

Dr. Glen Wright, Director of Animal Health

Dr. Robert Purvis, Extension Veterinarian

Gilbert Queeley, Research Associate

Dr. Keawin Sarjeant, Asst. Professor, Animal Science/Food Science-HACCP

Trevor Hylton, County Extension Agent (Leon & Wakulla)

Dr. Alex Bolques, County Extension Agent (Gadsden)

Melva Morfaw, County Extension Agent (Madison)

Donna Salters, Coordinator, Community Resource Development

Amelia Davis, Coordinator, Management Analysis, Extension Communications / Editor of SDA Newsletter

Linda Sapp, Project Coordinator, Vet-Tech Program

Faith Clarke, Coordinator, OASDFR Project

Sam Hand, Associate Professor, Extension

Covey Washington, Extension Agent

Conchita Newman, Extension Agent

Renysha Harris, Coordinator, Administrative Services

Rhonda Miller, Office Manager

Julie-Ann Valliant, Vet-Tech Extension

Cynthia Davis-Holloway— Recruiter, Vet Tech

Donna Swilley—Quincy Farm Office Manager

Godfrey Nurse—Quincy Farm Manager

SDA Outreach Project funded by USDA/APHIS.