



## 2023 CENTRIC REPORT DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE

**Who We Are:** The Division of Agriculture is mandated under Public Law 10-57 section 2653 (j), through the Department of Lands and Natural Resources to promote, develop, and administer agricultural programs including but not limited to plant industry, agricultural extension services, forestry and animal health industry.

The Division of Agriculture (DOA) has four functional sections or branches which operate under the auspices and direction of the Department of Lands and Natural Resources headed by the Secretary of DLNR. The Division's Director of Agriculture is responsible in managing and overseeing the functions of these sections.

- **ANIMAL HEALTH:**

To act as the housing of all imported animals under *public law 4-55, section 5321 sub section A thru D* as established was defined as a system of animal quarantine, inspection procedure and disease control activities to provide for the sound protection of domestic animals, poultry and birds as well as livestock animals.

- **FORESTRY:**

Forestry is to promote best management practice while sustaining a healthy, diversity and pro productivity on our limited and fragile forest and grassland resources and ecosystem for present and future generations. Such objectives will be carried through conservation, protection and the enhancement practices, while keeping the islands landscape provision. This program is also Federally funded under the USDA Forest Service.

- **HEMP PROGRAM:**

Local PL 21-25, which was signed into law on May 18 of this year, designates DOA to regulate hemp in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Although regulation is still being developed, any producer can apply to operate a hemp industry under the federal government.

- **PLANT INDUSTRY SECTION:**

The Plant Industry Section continues to serve as the distribution center for seedlings, cuttings and other plant propagative materials sold or donated to farmers as well as the general public. Variety testing of different seedlings of vegetables, fruit trees and other plants are being conducted and passed on to interested farmers.



*Invasive vines overtaking the trees*

DOA also administers the **Specialty Crop Block Grant Program** from USDA Agricultural Marketing Services, which enhances the competitiveness of specialty crops, which are defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops, including floriculture. Other programs from the USDA Agricultural Marketing Services include the **Micro Grants for Food Security Program** and the **H.R. 133 Stimulus funding**, which states are encouraged to prioritize projects that respond to COVID-19 impacts.

Furthermore, DOA manages the Kagman Farm Plot Program consisting of forty-eight farm plots. Each farm plot having an area of 10,000 square meters is available for interested individuals to learn how to plant, harvest and consume or sell their crops and vegetables.

Finally, DOA manages the federally funded **Zero Waste Initiative** – A program designed to reduce the burden placed on the Marpi Landfill by delivering green waste, yard waste and food scrapes into organic matter that will eventually be decomposed and recycled as a soil fertilizer and soil amendment, among which are key ingredients in organic farming.

**HOW ARE WE DOING?**

- Applied and awarded under FY23 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program the amount of \$244,560.90. The SCBGP funding supports farmers growing specialty crops, including fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, and nursery crops.
- Applied and awaiting FY23 Mini-Grant for Food Security Program award in the amount of \$223,529.41. The program will award grants to eligible applicants and organizations to increase the quantity of locally grown food through small scale farming, herding, and livestock operations in communities that have significant levels of food insecurity and import a significant quantity of food.
- After the awarding of our FY22 Micro- Grants for Food Security Program (MGFSP) in which the CNMI received \$125,000, the Agriculture Marketing Services notified us that supplemental funds in the amount of \$17,857.14 were added to the award. The program has solicited and soon will be awarding successful projects under this program.
- Applied and received \$100,000 from the Forest Stewardship Program, \$70,000 from the Urban Community Forest Program, and \$75,000 for

- Forest Health Program from the U.S. Forrester Service.

- Applied and awarded \$92,000 of federal funds under FY23 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) for Forest Health program to address the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle, *Macuna puriens* the little red fire ants and other invasive vines and plants.

- Awarded a total of \$150,000 under the FY22 & FY23 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) for the renovation and rehabilitation of the nursery facilities on Saipan and Rota.

- Awarded a total of \$92,000 under the FY23 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) for the Forest Health program to continue addressing invasive plants and species.

- 13,888 customers visited the Garapan Farmers Market, which made \$169,970.15 sales



*Little Fire Ants, a destructive and deadly invasive species found in neighboring islands*



*Students learning to plant trees at their schools*



*Students learning about invasive species*

- Twenty-one applicants under the FY21 Mini Grant for Food Security Program have been awarded funds to implement their projects to either plant vegetables and crops, or raise animals such as ducks, pigs, goats and cows.
- Invited Dr. Theodore Radovich from UH Manoa who conducted 3 workshops on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. 40 attended the workshop in Saipan, 45 in Tinian, and 35 attended in Rota. The workshop was based on regenerative agriculture and agroecology. The workshop resulted in farmers expressing their interest in adapting ecological practices and their concerns in how federal program can better serve farmers throughout the CNMI.
- Recently applied for funds under a newly established federal program called Resilient Food System Infrastructure Program from the Agricultural Marketing Services. The bulk of the \$2,038,278 available for the CNMI will be awarded on a competitive basis to eligible projects to expand capacity and infrastructure for the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, or distribution of targeted local and regional agricultural products.

- Forestry nursery propagated 500 Da'ok tree seedlings, 40, sour sop, 250 Banalu,
- Under Forest Stewardship Program, 32 landowners given technical assistance, 18 educational assistance, 8,254 seeds produced or distributed, and 562.11 pounds of improved seeds collected on three inhabited islands
- 291 tractor services were performed for farmers, which included 96 mowers, 50 plows, 16 disk, 92 rotovators, 8 augurs and 29 land clearing.

### **REVENUES & EXPENSES**

Division's local budget: \$563,305.00

- Personnel: \$563,305.00
- Operation: \$0

Federal Grant:

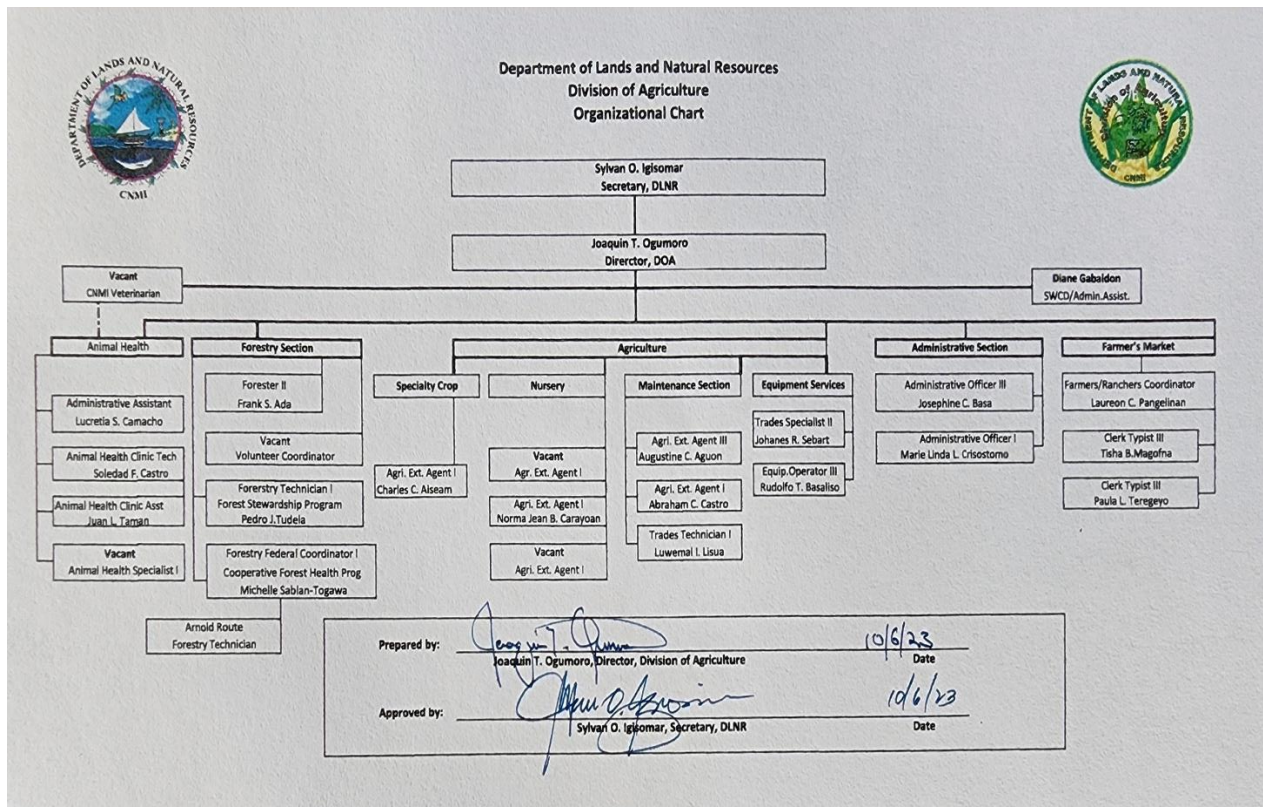
- USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program: \$244,560.90
- USDA Micro Grant for Food Security Program: \$142,857.14
- USDA Forest Health Program: \$75,000.00
- USDA Urban & Community Forest Program: \$70,000.00
- USDA Forest Stewardship Program: \$100,000.00

**What's Next?**

DOA will be perusing new and existing activities in this fiscal year including the following:

1. Once approved, a notice on the availability of funds under FY23 MGFSP will be published in the local papers to solicit proposals under the FY23
2. Complete issuance of awards to successful applicants under FY21 & FY22 Micro-Grant for Food Security Program
3. Solicit applications for FY23 MGFSP awards
4. Issue available farm plots to farmers
5. Convene Forest Action Plan Committee meeting

6. Complete renovation and rehabilitation of nursery facilities, including other DOA facilities and the animal clinic in As Perdido.
7. Work with FEMA to complete new office buildings and portion of nursery facility.
8. Establish office automated network for filing and other purposes.
9. Survey, collect, identify and map locations of invasive plants and species.
10. Subgrant awarded funds under Resilient Food System Infrastructure Program, HR 133, and other federal programs.
11. Help recruit a license and regulatory veterinarian



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