



2024 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 from 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.



*Students learning to plant trees at their schools
(Kagman High School)*

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.

DOA is also a recipient of funds under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to rehabilitate the nursery facilities on Saipan and Rota, which were damaged as a result of Super Typhoon Utu. In addition to the cost of construction, funds were also used to purchase a pickup truck for the facility in Rota.

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 FY24 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program the amount of \$244,562.69. The SCBGP funding supports farmers growing specialty crops, including fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, and nursery crops.
- Applied and awarded FY24 Mini-Grant for Food Security Program award in the amount of \$139,701.24. 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.
- Applied and awarded under the new USDA-AMS RFSI program in the amount of \$2,038,278.00. The program conducted an RFA workshops and received a total of 20 application that will be reviewed and recommend for funding.
- Forestry nursery propagated over 2,000 native seedlings, such as Plumeria, Arcia Confusa, Desert rose, Langit, Vetiver grass, crotons, I-fit, Nonak, Achoti, Gulos, Da;ok, Hibiscus, Fox Tail, Flame tree yellow and red, Gulus, Paipai, snake plant, Talsai, Banalo, Fish Tail,

Yellow bells, Pandanus, Monkey Pods, Banyon.



Epipremnum aureum-Golden

- Established crop trials under the SCBGP FY22 projects at the DOA compound and invited farmers, students, and senior citizens from the Aging Office to experience various farming techniques and also learn proper harvesting techniques. Crops tested includes eggplant, cucumber, chili pepper, corn, watermelons, taro, and tomatoes.
- Awarded a total of \$150,000 under the FY22 and FY23 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) for the renovation and rehabilitation of the

nursery facilities on Saipan and Rota and for smart trees workers.

- Under Forest Stewardship Program, 40 landowners given technical assistance, 25 educational assistance, 8,254 seeds produced or distributed, and 562.11 pounds of improved seeds collected on three inhabited islands.
- Recently installed 2 high tunnel nursery systems in Tinian and Rota for local community farmers to implement various farming techniques that can possibly improve crop production. The systems were installed at the local DLNR offices for the purpose of demonstration plots.
- As a result of the establishment of crop trial and a farm plot demonstration plot at the DOA compound, the SCBGP program was able to supply the market with an overall harvest of 640 pounds of various crops, including tomatoes, watermelons, eggplant, chili peppers, and corns.



*Students learning to plant trees at their schools
(Da'ok High School)*

- Animal Health Services issued 97 entry permits for various types of animals and poultry, and issued 18 licenses for veterinarians to practice their profession in the CNMI.
- DOA also provides assistance to the Saipan and Northern Islands Soil and Water Conservation District, and together with NRCS, are working diligently to complete the Kagman

Watershed Project. The project is designed to prevent flooding in the Kagman area, provide irrigation systems to the government owned farm plots and prevent runoffs from entering the ocean and killing the precious reefs and fishes. Because the project has been idle for some time, a firm has been selected and will be doing another Environmental Impact Statement as required by law for the project to continue moving forward. The remaining 7 to 9 phases to complete the project will cost around \$2,640,000.00, with \$1,440,000.00 from the federal government and \$1,200,000.00 from the CNMI.

- Applied and awarded \$46,000 of federal funds under FY24 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) for Forest Health program to address the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle, *Macuna puriens* the little red fire ants and other new existing invasive vines and plants.
- 12,374 customers visited the Garapan Farmers Market, which made \$131,655.01 sales
- Over three hundred applications were received under the FY23 solicitation for funding assistance under the Micro grant for food Security program. Of this number, seventy-four projects will be awarded for the applicants to either plant vegetables and crops, or raise animals such as ducks, pigs, goats and cows.
- 82 tractor services were performed for farmers, which included 32 mowers, 4 plows, 27 disk, 8 rotovators, 5 augurs and 6 land clearing.

REVENUES & EXPENSES

Division's local budget: \$563,305.00

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

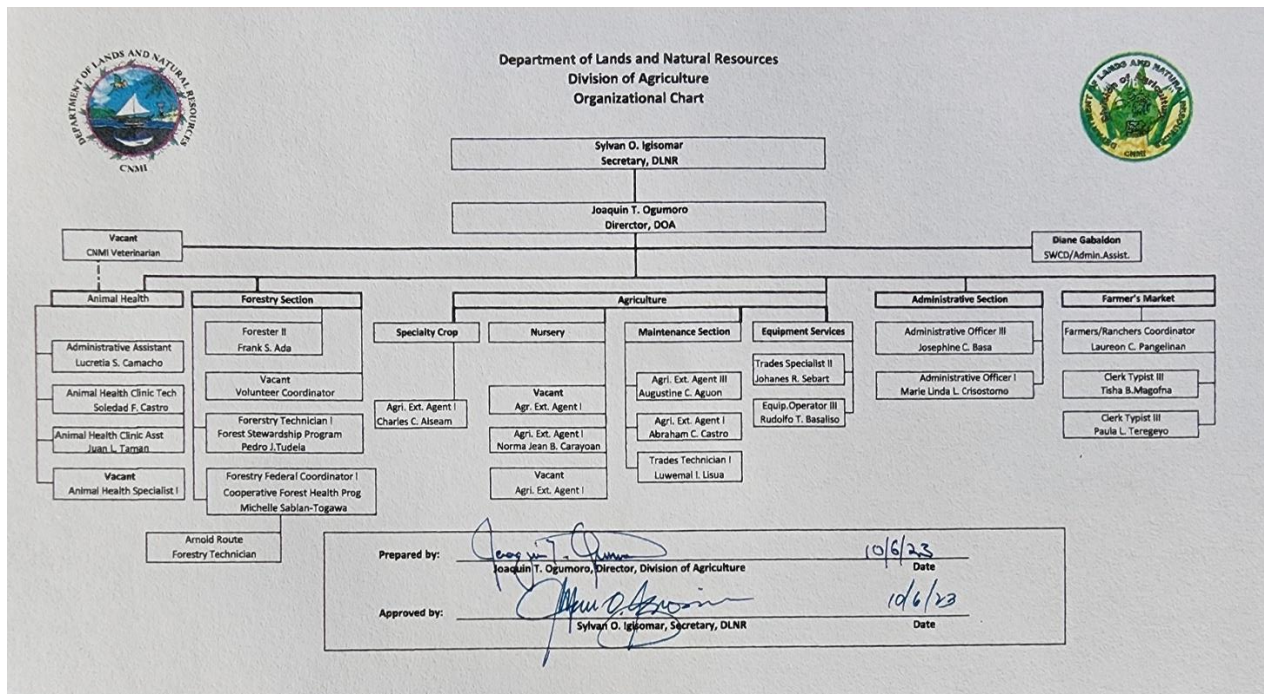
Federal Grant:

- USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program: \$244,560.90
- USDA Micro Grant for Food Security Program: \$223,529.41
- Resiliency Food Security Infrastructure: \$2,038,277.82
- USDA Forest Health Program: \$85,000.00
BIL Forest Health: \$46,000.00
- USDA Urban & Community Forest Program: \$24,000.00
- USDA Forest Stewardship Program: \$20,426.00
- BIL UCF/FSP: \$75,000.00

WHAT'S NEXT?

DOA will be performing the following activities in the coming fiscal year:

1. Distribute awards to successful applicants under FY23 MGFSP
2. Announce availability of funds under FY24 MGFSP
3. Revise farm plot permits to incorporate agroforestry farming techniques
4. Convene Forest Action Plan Committee meeting
5. Move into new office building
6. Renovate forest nursery facility
7. Renovate DOA nursery facility
8. Invest in automated filing system
9. Distribute available farm plots
10. Build mulching facility



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