



# *Ka Lono Pua*

*"The Flower News"*

Vol. VI, No. 1, January 1999

Oahu County

Cooperative Extension Service

## **USDA's Specialties Census**

The USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service will be mailing questionnaires for the 1998 Census of Horticultural Specialties to growers during the first week of January. Covering not only the major floricultural crops, this census also includes questions on many of the minor species of cut flowers and cut greens, potted flowering plants, foliage plants, and bedding/garden plants.

The report also has separate sections on perennials, plugs, cuttings, on the production of nursery plants, turfgrass, bulbs, flower and vegetable seeds, and transplants for commercial vegetable producers.

Obviously, this survey will be very important for the industry, both nationally and in Hawaii. Issues relating to funding of floriculture programs at the national, state, and, perhaps, local levels can be addressed with the data collected. All growers should be diligent and timely in completing and returning the survey for the sake of the industry.

For further information contact Nancy Swaim at USDA: Nancy Swaim, USDA/NASS (301) 763-7373 or [nswaim@nass.usda.gov](mailto:nswaim@nass.usda.gov)

### **In This Issue...**

- ◆ Can we use DIF in Hawaii?
- ◆ The Latest US Ag. Legislation
- ◆ Changes in USDA Crop Insurance
- ◆ New DuPont Settlement ...and more

### **Future Happenings**

Jan 18	Martin Luther King Day
Feb 1	America's Endangered Species, HI Botanical Soc., UH Manoa
Feb 12	Organic Farming Workshop, UH Manoa
Feb 14	Valentine's Day (Sunday)
Feb 15	Presidents' Day Holiday
Mar 8-10	IPM Conference, Raleigh, N.C.
Mar 17	St. Patrick's Day
Mar 26	Prince Kuhio Day
Apr 4	Easter Sunday
Apr 21	Secretaries Day
May 9	Mother's Day
May 31	Memorial Day
Jun 11	Kamehameha Day
Jul 5	Independence Day Holiday
Jul 10-14	Ohio Florists' Association Short Course, Columbus, Ohio
Aug. 27-29	Farwest Show, Portland, OR Oregon Association of Nurserymen
Sep 27-30	5 <sup>th</sup> Annual Hawaii Mid-Pacific Hort Conf. And Trade Show, Hilo

# What's the DIF and Can We Use It in Hawaii?

The difference between the day and night temperatures is termed DIF. It is often related to stem elongation and controlling plant height. DIF is used in mainland greenhouses where temperatures can be precisely controlled. The heights of poinsettias, chrysanthemums, Easter lilies, and other crops can be affected by DIF. A positive DIF results when the day temperatures are higher than the night temperatures. This can cause stems to elongate causing plants to get taller than desired.

A negative DIF results when the day temperatures are lower than the night temperatures. Stem elongation is reduced, and plants remain short. Growers in cooler climates allow their greenhouses to cool during the day. They often have to heat them at night, so they keep night temperatures above the day temperatures.

Growers in warm climates cannot afford to cool greenhouses, so most think that DIF cannot be used in warm climates. First of all, Hawaii's growers should think of the DIF concept differently from growers in cool climates. The important thing to remember is that the warmer the day gets compared to the night temperature the taller plants will be. So, Hawaii's growers should try to manage the growing environment to minimize the amount of positive DIF.

Secondly, it is the early morning temperatures that are more important, not the midday temperatures. So Hawaii's growers should be more concerned about the early morning DIF than the midday temperature.

In Hawaii, there is a period during the winter when the outside air temperature at sunrise is lower than the greenhouse temperatures. Also this is probably true on calm, windless nights in shadehouses, but to a lesser extent. Greenhouses should be opened to allow this cooler air to enter before dawn. If they are left open and kept cool for a period of 2-3 hours after sunrise, the effects

of a positive DIF will be minimized. Even when outside temperatures are not cool, it is important to vent the greenhouse early to reduce the heating due to solar radiation. Early venting of greenhouses in warm climates like Hawaii does make a difference in crop growth.

The use of fans to vent humid night air will have a cooling effect through evaporation as well as removal of the heat-laden air. Fans can be operated on time clocks for a couple hours. They would add costs to an operation, both initially and in electrical and maintenance charges over time. These would have to be balanced off against the benefit of more compact plants and a better price for them.

Water can also be used to cool greenhouses. In some areas, ground water temperatures may be too high to cool plants at sunrise. Also, when the humidity is near 100%, evaporative cooling will be minimal. Ground water on Oahu ranges from 69 to 74° F, however, the warming that occurs in transport to the greenhouses varies from place to place. For plants like poinsettias, overhead water is never recommended.

Although not usually a problem, when plants are shorter than desired, growers can also increase DIF to force plants to grow faster.

In using DIF, growers must keep temperature records both for inside a facility and outdoors. They would have to have some way to record temperatures around the clock and not have just a max-min thermometer. Temperatures should be recorded at plant height - not people height or at the entrance to the facility.

Although Hawaii's growers cannot always fine tune temperatures to control DIF precisely, they can adjust some cultural practices to modify the effects of DIF on their plants.

## DuPont Settles Again

On December 31, 1998, DuPont and the law firm Alston & Bird, which represented the company, agreed to pay \$11.3 million in a recent suit. The suit alleged that they withheld critical evidence during a lawsuit trial with nurserymen over Benlate DF fungicide.

The growers, who originally settled for \$4.25 million, will not receive any of the money from the latest lawsuit. Instead, four Georgia law schools will each receive \$2.5 million to endow department chairs. These positions will be aimed at teaching professionalism and ethics in the practice of law.

In addition, DuPont will pay \$1 million to conduct annual symposiums on professionalism and legal ethics. The Alston & Bird law firm will also pay \$250,000 to the Georgia Supreme Court's committee on professionalism. This committee will promote legal ethics and further the goals of enhancing professionalism in the practice of law in Georgia.

## Potato Planting Time

The inmate was aware that all prison mail passes through censors. When he got a letter from his wife asking about the family garden – “Honey, when do I plant potatoes?” – he wrote back, “Do not, under any circumstances, dig up our old garden spot. That’s where I buried all my guns.”

Within days his wife wrote back, “Six investigators came to the house. They dug up every square inch of the back yard.”

By return mail she got his answer: “Now is the time to plant potatoes.”

– Rev. Robert Moore, Jr.

## DOGAH News

At our Christmas banquet a pod/flask survey was distributed to those present. Copies were later sent to those DOGAH members that did not attend the banquet. The survey is to assess the number of pods that DOGAH labs need to fill the member's orders for flasks. If you haven't completed and returned the survey, and you intend to order flasks in 1999, please return it by January 14<sup>th</sup> to:

Ed Mersino  
Cooperative Extension Service  
910 California Ave.  
Wahiawa, Hi 96786

Remember -- better late than never. Mahalo!

## The Latest U.S. Agriculture Legislation

President Clinton signed the \$486.7 billion omnibus spending bill last week. Here's a quick review from SAF of some of the issues that were favorable to the floral industry: \$1.2 million for funding floral and nursery crop research, an unbiased scientific study on ergonomics conducted by the National Academy of Sciences, full deductibility of insurance premiums for the self-employed by 2003 rather than 2007, phase out of methyl bromide in the U.S. moved from 2001 to 2005, repealed a provision that would have required growers to pay 10% of imputed premiums for basic catastrophic crop insurance instead of \$60, and farmers can now use permanent income averaging.

Issues that weren't resolved and still need additional industry attention include further estate tax relief and migrant worker reform.

From GMPRO greEn-MAIL, for October 27, 1998 -A weekly e-mail from editor David Kuack

# USDA LOWERS CROP INSURANCE PREMIUMS

WASHINGTON, January 8, 1999--Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman today announced an estimated 30 percent premium reduction for farmers on their crop insurance policies. To ensure that all farmers have the opportunity to benefit from this one time premium reduction this year, crop insurance companies will accept insurance applications on crops having sales closing dates that have already passed.

For example, an insured winter wheat farmer in Texas having a sales closing date of September 30, 1998, for crop year 1999 coverage, now has until March 15, 1999, to evaluate the benefits of increased protection at a lower cost. Producers choosing not to insure last September will have the same opportunity to use the discount to obtain "buy up" protection. "Buy up" protection is an amount of coverage that is at least 50 percent of a farm's yield and 100 percent of an established market price.

"Given low crop prices, we want to ensure that as many family farmers as possible take advantage this year of the opportunity to increase their crop insurance coverage or benefit from reduced cost," said Glickman. "The plans we announce today will help provide farmers greater security."

The funds for this one-time incentive are part of the \$2.375 billion that Congress appropriated to assist farmers suffering from crop and economic losses. This initiative is the first element of USDA's plan to strengthen the farm safety net.

The application period will provide eligible farmers time to take advantage of the discount by either applying for insurance or increasing their protection. The final percentage of premium discount will depend on how many farmers choose to insure or increase their protection and will be announced after sales have closed.

Farmers growing crops with sales closing dates between July 31, 1998, and February 15, 1999,

are eligible to increase their protection or obtain crop insurance by February 28, 1999.

Farmers should contact a crop insurance agent to obtain more information and discuss their options. A listing of crop insurance agents is available at local Farm Service Agency offices. More protection is offered for an additional cost.

EXAMPLE: A corn producer with 200 acres, 150 bu. average yield, and a \$2.10 price election.

	65% Coverage	70% Coverage
Protection	\$40,950 (\$204.75/acre)	\$44,100 (\$220.50/acre)
Expected producer cost	\$764 (\$3.82/acre)	\$1,171 (\$5.86/acre)
30% premium discount	-\$229	-\$351
Actual producer cost	\$535 (\$2.68/acre)	\$820 (\$4.10/acre)

In this example, the actual producer cost for 70% coverage (\$820) is only \$56 more than the expected producer cost of 65% coverage (\$764). This means that the producer can obtain a \$15.75 per acre increase in protection for only \$0.28 more per acre.

NOTE: This example is for illustration only. Actual costs and protection will vary. See a crop insurance agent for information specific to your operation.

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The young do not know enough to be prudent, and therefore they attempt the impossible – and achieve it, generation after generation.

– Pearl S. Buck

## America's Endangered Species

The Hawaiian Botanical Society is sponsoring a special presentation entitled "America's Endangered Species: Don't Say Goodbye". David Liittschwager and Susan Middleton, renown nature photographers and authors, will be presenting a slide show and lecture. Their books include "Here Today: Portraits of Our Vanishing Species" and "Witness: Endangered Species of North America". They are now working on a new book about Hawaii's endangered species. Free of charge.

Monday, Feb 1, 1999 7:30 p.m.  
U.H Manoa Campus  
St. John Plant Science Lab, Room 11

## Sailing Away

A preacher was asked to give a talk at a local women's health symposium. His wife asked about his topic, but he was too embarrassed to admit that he had been asked to speak about sex. Thinking quickly, he replied, "I'm talking about sailing."

"Oh, that's nice," said his wife.

The next day, at the grocery store, a young woman who had attended the lecture recognized the minister's wife. "That was certainly an excellent talk your husband gave yesterday," she said. "He really has a unique perspective on the subject."

Somewhat chagrined, the minister's wife replied, "Gee, funny you should think so, I mean, he's only done it twice. The first time he threw up, and the second time, his hat blew off."

– D. E. Norling.

## "Ka Lono Pua" Goes Electronic

Because the cost of mailing out "Ka Lono Pua" is high in regards to printing, producing and posting, we are going to e-mail copies to those that we know have e-mail. E-mail is faster, too - if you check your mail regularly.

If you would like to continue to receive the hard copy in the future, please give me a call at 622-4185. If we do not hear from you, future editions will arrive by e-mail only.

Also if you would like to receive "Ka Lono Pua" by e-mail and haven't, contact us so we can add your e-mail address to our listings. If you don't have e-mail or we don't know what it is, you will continue to receive a regular copy of "Ka Lono Pua."

Mahalo!

If you have any questions or suggestions, give me a call at 622-4185, Tuesdays and Thursdays or e-mail me at [mersino@hawaii.edu](mailto:mersino@hawaii.edu). Check out our web site "Ask the Experts" at <http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/~experts/>

Edwin F. Mersino  
County Extension Agent  
Agriculture Program

## Flying High

Q: What's a sure sign you're flying the wrong airline?

A: The pilot has a heart attack, and the air-traffic controller talks a flight attendant through takeoff.

– Peter S. Langston

- What's going on this month?
- How can you insure last year's crop?
- What does the 1999 census mean to you?
- What's DIF and can Hawaii's growers use it?
- What did Congress do for Agriculture last year?

The answer to these and many other questions can be found inside.