



HELPING PEOPLE HELP THE LAND — Addressing Resource Concerns in West Maui...page 4



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## President's Message



Hola NPHNRCSE Members,

I hope this finds you well. Spring is in the air and it is time to look how NPHNRCSE can bloom this spring. In my January message, I mentioned some items we are looking to improve; one of them is our newsletter. I want to thank Kristie Wiley and the communications committee for doing such an excellent job and making our newsletter more interactive, informative and fun.

I am looking into hosting another VTC just like we did last October. I need your input on what you would like us to cover. Please send your ideas and suggestions for topics to your regional representative.

It's election time! Please consider running for office. Our National Council is full of great ideas and enthusiasm. It will be an honor to have you as part of our team.

Soon you will see a call for auction items. Yes we will have an auction this year to continue funding our scholars. Isn't it exciting? How will this happen? We will have an online auction this summer. Start thinking about what exciting items you can donate. Heydsha Cordero will be sending more details in the next couple of months.

We are in the last stages of finalizing the Evaluation Criteria for Regional Proposals. What is this? The council will be asking for proposals so the regions can host or co-host training sessions and workshops—and NPHNRCSE will help finance the regional workshops! Please stay tuned for more information coming in the next couple of months.

Happy trails,

ASTRID MARTINEZ  
NPHNRCSE President



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## NPHNRCSE 2013 Election News

by Mike Castillo, Election Committee Chairperson

The 2013 NPHNRCSE Election Committee would like to officially announce the 2013 NPHNRCSE Election will be starting soon.

According to our NPHNRCSE Constitution and Bylaws, the positions that will be open in 2013 are:

- ▶ Vice-President
- ▶ Treasurer
- ▶ Southeast-Regional Representative
- ▶ South Central-Regional Representative
- ▶ West-Regional Representative

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*NOPHNCSE 2013 Election News continued...*

As per Constitution and Bylaws, in order to participate in the election, one must be a current paid member. The elections committee has established the deadline of April 30, 2013, in order to be considered a current or paid member. So if you are interested and plan to run for office, or most importantly, wish to nominate and vote in the upcoming election, it is very important that your dues for 2013 are paid by the noted date.

Also, to login to the NOPHNCSE website and participate in the election process, you will need to be a paid member. The website will not allow non-members to login and participate.

The following timeline has been established for the 2013 election:

- **Membership dues must be paid by April 30, 2013.**
- **Nomination period will be from May 5 to May 28, 2013.**
- **Election period will be from June 1 to June 25, 2013.**
- **Runoff election period, if needed, will be from July 8 to July 20, 2013.**
- **The results will be sent to Astrid Martinez, NOPHNCSE President, by July 31, 2013.**

The 2013 NOPHNCSE Election Committee would like to thank all those who participated in the 2012 election process.

Any organization is only as strong as its members who care enough to participate. Please participate in this important process.

2013 Election/ Nomination committee members are:

- » Mike Castillo, Texas—Chair, South Central Region
- » Tamara Buitenwerf, Iowa—Vice Chair, Northern Plains Region
- » Kristin Graham Chavez, Arizona—Member, West Region
- » Russell Castro, Texas—Member, South Central Region
- » Louie Gamboa, Colorado—Member, Midwest Region

## Back to the Basics with Gardening and Composting

by Tamara Buitenwerf, Soil Conservationist, West Union, Iowa

When was the last time you dug your hands in the cool, moist earth? When was the last time you planted a few vegetable seeds and saw the fruits of your labor? For some of us, it was last spring and if you're like me with this weather, you're itching to get back outside. But maybe you fall into the crowd that doesn't have the time, or take the time, to plant a garden. For one of my friends, she hadn't gardened since she first got married and her kids are teenagers now. This past summer, she found a corner flower bed here, and an empty flower bed there, and began sowing seeds. In doing so, she found that she really enjoyed gardening and by mid-summer she was already planning her garden for the next year.

Why do I share this with you? It doesn't take a green thumb, plant-loving person to garden. Whether you live in the country and can plant acres of garden, or you live in town with a tiny space, you too can garden. Be inspired to do so! Start with an herb garden or some green onions. Plant what you like to eat? Do you have small kids at home? Get them involved, too.

I have found many benefits of gardening and composting. Working full time, keeping a home, and raising three little kids takes a lot of time and energy. After a long day, being out in the garden watching the sunset and the colors fill the sky is relaxing, even if you have to pull a few weeds.

## Mi Casa es Su Casa: My House is your House

by Jacqueline Padron, Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager (USDA Hispanic Employment Program)

USDA, Office of Human Resources Management's Diversity, Recruitment, and Work/Life Division

You're invited to visit the Hispanic Employment Program (HEP) SharePoint site. They say knowledge is power, right? Gain access to up-to-date information about Hispanics in USDA. You will find training and recruitment materials; teleconference agendas and minutes; business plan examples; Hispanic Heritage Month information; data reports; translations; calendar of events and website links. The HEP SharePoint site is the secret tool to help you work more efficiently on many of our state and national initiatives and projects.

It is easy to get access; and it takes less than 3 minutes. Just follow the steps below.

- 1 Click on the link and login with your eAuth credentials: <https://portal.usda.gov/sites/OHRM/HEP/>
- 2 Then click on the link that says "Click here to Request Access."
- 3 Enter your first and last name and submit the form.

Voilà! Once Information Technology (ITT) receives your eAuth information, you will receive access and a notice by email.

*Back to the Basics with Gardening and Composting continued...*



*Tamara's daughter, Bethany, pretending her home grown squash is a telephone.*

Composting allows you to utilize scraps around the house that would have otherwise contributed to filling the garbage can. Composting creates nutrient rich food for little seedlings just starting to grow. Both gardening and composting are things my young kids participate in. It helps them appreciate the food they eat as they cover the seeds, water the onion shoots, dig carrots and harvest broccoli and tomatoes. It is amazing to see how they are eager to eat the vegetables they grew when they normally wouldn't desire to eat them. In addition to the relaxation and teachable moments for children, another benefit of gardening is having a mini grocery store right at home. When I want to make fresh salsa, or need some tomatoes for the BLT sandwich my husband requests for supper, I just look to my garden.

Have I convinced or encouraged you to try a garden this spring? Are you still not sure where to even start? Take this as a challenge to give it a try. I'm almost positive that you'll reap rewards for your efforts.

Let me give you a few tips or hints that might help.

### Composting Tips

► Good compost materials include any food scraps, animal manures, wood ashes, crop residues, tree bark, brush, sawdust, grass, leaves, small tree branches, flowers, nut hulls, fruit peels, paper, cotton, wool, fish scraps, bird carcasses, corn cobs, corn stalks, sawdust, spoiled milk, egg shells, feathers, coffee/tea grounds, hair, and rotted food.

► Things to avoid include meat and fats which attract pests and break down slowly, dog/cat manures, walnuts, and pine needles. Pine needles are extremely acidic. (Pine needles do well in a separate pile to be used for acid-loving plants).

► There are various methods of composting. One easy method is done in layers—like lasagna. Layer straw/brush, fresh organic matter, and then add moist soil or compost. The decomposition is performed by bacteria which utilize nitrogen as their energy source.

► It is important to have a source of nitrogen (animal manure, etc) to the pile. Most of the material should be carbohydrates (grass, straw, leaves, and veggies). It's also important for the pile to stay moist, but not soggy.

► You can speed the process by covering the pile, turning the pile often, and chopping the larger materials so they break down faster. If you don't want a pile out in the middle of your yard, you can drill holes in a trash can and layer in there. Insert a perforated pipe or tile into the center. Regularly roll the trash can around to mix the contents and allow excess water to drain out.

While composting is relatively easy, it is also very scientific. The carbon to nitrogen ratio, moisture, temperature and ventilation are all important.

The ideal ratio of carbon to nitrogen is 30:1. If the ratio falls below 26:1, the microorganisms burn out. Too much nitrogen puts ammonia in the air which causes an odor.

Some common carbon to nitrogen ratios are:

Material	C:N Ratio
Wood	700:1
Sawdust	500:1
Paper	170:1
Grass clippings	19:1
Leaves	40-80:1
Fruit waste	35:1
Rotted manure	20:1
Straw	60:1

You want your compost pile to be moist but not soggy—50 percent is ideal. Too moist is anaerobic decomposition, which creates a foul odor. Not enough moisture results in too little decomposition. Microbial activity causes heat. At 160 degrees, pathogens and weed seeds are killed. Ventilation is best achieved by turning.

Turning the compost helps keep it from getting too hot, speeds up decomposition, and insures oxygen for microbes. One can improve ventilation with coarse materials, adding sticks to the pile, poking holes into the compost, and burying perforated pipe into the pile.

Whether you're planting seeds into a prepared garden bed or clay pots on your porch, compost can be used a variety of ways. You can till it into your existing soil, spread it on the top of the entire area or specifically place it around the plant.

A few things you might want to take into consideration when you're planting are companion planting and weed management. Did you know that plants like growing near some things and not others? For example, carrots like to be planted near tomatoes but dislike beans and cabbage. Pumpkins like corn, but not potatoes. Detailed lists of companion planting relationships can be found with a simple search on the internet or in your local library.

Weed control can be your biggest headache, but can also be easily remedied. This can be done in a variety of ways. The easiest way for me to control weeds is to spread newspaper or brown paper bags between the rows of seeds and cover the paper with freshly cut grass. This not only creates a weed barrier, but it also holds the moisture in the soil.

This gives you some basic information for gardening and composting. I hope it helps you get started or reminds you of some methods that have slipped your memory. A simple book with easy-to-understand terms that I've used is *Sustainable Food Production* by Donald Sobkowiak. Resources abound with gardening information if you'd like to learn more.



*Weeds creeping in an area of a garden where compost was not used.*

*"In addition to the relaxation and teachable moments for children, another benefit of gardening is having a mini grocery store right at home."*



## Helping People Help the Land

# NRCS Coral Reef Initiative Helps Rancher Address Resource Concerns in West Maui, Hawaii

by Ranae Ganske-Cerizo, District Conservationist, Kahului Service Center

The West Maui Coral Reef Initiative (WMCRI) is a focused effort of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to address land-based sources of pollution threats arising from agricultural activities in western Maui watersheds. The initiative is providing assistance to agricultural producers and other non-federal land managers to improve management of agricultural runoff and other natural resource concerns. Under the initiative, farmers and ranchers are encouraged to install conservation practices such as cover crops, vegetative barriers, sediment basins or micro-irrigation systems to minimize soil erosion. In addition, tree/shrub establishment or restoration of rare/declining habitat is also encouraged on forest land.



Field before NRCS assistance.

*"I'm very fortunate to have received a contract through the Coral Reef Initiative funding. It would have been near impossible to achieve my conservation goal without it. Mahalo nui to the Kahului NRCS office for all the planning and funding assistance."*

—Tony Gomes, Rancher, West Maui, Hawaii



Gomes' field after NRCS assistance.

The field pictured on the left was a former pineapple field operated by Maui Land & Pineapple Co (ML&P). The field was infested with Formosa koa (Acacia Formosa) after ML&P stopped planting pineapple. These former pineapple fields are now being leased out to new and existing farmers and ranchers. Tony Gomes, a rancher in West Maui, is glad to be one of those ranchers to get a lease.

Gomes heard about possible funding assistance in 2004 and signed up to get assistance to develop his pasture, but did not receive funding that year. Born and raised on Maui, it was only natural that Gomes wanted to improve the land he was leasing for future generations. Gomes admitted that it was near impossible to achieve his goals without financial assistance.

Through WMCRI, Gomes was able to address several natural resource concerns such as:

- Remove the invasive trees through tree/shrub site preparation.
- Manage the debris through woody residue treatment, where the larger branches/limbs were piled for decomposition and the smaller ones chipped as mulch and applied around the koa seedlings.
- Establish a stand of native koa (Acacia koa) trees to try and restore some of the native habitat lost through the plantation days.
- Install an exclusion fence to keep his cattle out while the koa trees take root.

## NRCS Employees Participate in Tri-national Meeting in Mexico City

Homer Sanchez, National Grazing Lands Team, (Central National Technology Support Center) and Michael Margo, Ecological Site Specialist, Marfa, Texas, participated in the third North American Grasslands Experts and Partners Tri-national Meeting in Mexico City, Mexico on April 23-25, 2013. The tri-national (Canada, United States, and Mexico) North American Grasslands Alliance is part of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) and provides a collaborative framework for compiling and communicating relevant information on the economic, social, and environmental values of North American Grasslands to decision makers and the general public. Sanchez and Margo presented information on the value and use of ecological sites, and the efforts that are currently being utilized to develop the ecological site descriptions. For additional reading, please see ["Building a Continental Partnership for North American Grasslands."](#)

## Feliz Cinco de Mayo

Cinco de Mayo officially commemorates the anniversary of an early victory by Mexican forces over French forces in the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862. A relatively minor holiday in Mexico, in the United States Cinco de Mayo has evolved into a celebration of Mexican culture and heritage, particularly in areas with large Mexican-American populations.

Read more about Cinco de Mayo at [History.com](http://History.com).

# Minerva Margo Featured in *Enduring Women*: A Photography and Oral History Exhibit in Texas



Minerva Margo looks around her ranch in the Rio Grande Valley.

Minerva Margo, wife of the late Ray Margo (the first interim president of NOPHNCSE) is featured in "Enduring Women," a photo documentary at the Bullock Texas State History Museum in Austin, Texas. "Enduring Women," a collaboration between St. Edward's University and the Bullock museum, started as a class last fall that taught 21 students from the history and photocommunications programs to engage in undergraduate creative research from an interdisciplinary viewpoint. The class paired photographers and historians, and each pair set off to meet one of 12 Texas women who work and live off the land.

College student, Bibiana Cantua Alderete, interviewed Margo for the project. Alderete shared her experience with [The Monitor](#), a Texas publication, and was quoted as saying:

*"Well, in the case of Minerva, you think about somebody who nobody would really know about, not necessarily someone going down in history, but we learned her story. Not only was I able to say, 'I know where you're coming from.' It almost felt like she was some sort of an aunt to me, like a female force saying, 'No, you can do this. Look at what I've been through.' It helped me connect with that, with my mom and the way my mom inspires me, and so it kind of relates to how other women in history are inspiring."*

Enduring Women: A Photography and Oral History Exhibit opened on February 2, and will be on display at the Bullock museum through May 19.

Hear Minerva Margo tell her story and see some photos from the project on [YouTube!](#)

## Mobilized to Spend More Time in the Field New Jersey Employee Serves as Role Model on Mobile Computer

by Barbara Phillips, USDA-NRCS Public Affairs Specialist, New Jersey

NRCS Soil Conservationist Uziel Torres has been using a mobile work station for about a year. The Tough Book (laptop) he uses is equipped with a GPS and an internet aircard which gains him access to the internet anywhere he has cellular phone service. He also has been assigned a portable printer, and has an InfoCase H2 Inversion Strap for carrying the computer "hands-free."

Uziel says he likes the way having this equipment has improved the service he provides to New Jersey farmers.

*"If a farmer asks for information about a specific conservation practice, I am able to print the information right at his or her farm. I don't have to go back to the office to print it out and mail it."*

He also noted that he is now able to more quickly certify practices in the field. He can use the GPS, collect the data about the installed practice, and update the record for certification without leaving the farm. And if the

farmer can't recall what practices were in past conservation plans for the farm, Uziel can access ProTracts on the spot to get the information needed to proceed with their current business.

He also has found it beneficial to be able to contact his office in Woodstown by email or messenger to retrieve information from his files. With the help of a co-worker who locates what he needs in the office he doesn't have to set another appointment with the busy farmer!

Of course, not everything about the mobile workstation is perfect, and Uziel has some tips for new users. He has learned it is best to download farm plans, maps and other information in the office before heading out to the field for an appointment. Downloading large files through an aircard connection can be painfully slow, and if you are working in an area where Internet access is poor, you may have to relocate or return to the office to successfully get those files. He also suggests a back-up battery and/or an electrical inverter for the car might save the mobile work station user some aggravation. When you

are in remote areas, having the ability to re-charge the system is critical. He is also thinking about better ways to arrange the printer and laptop in his vehicle so that he doesn't need to set up his "mobile office" at each appointment.

He readily admits, though, the benefits outweigh the issues, and he is happy to accommodate periodic inconvenience for the overall improvement in the ability to get the job done!



Uziel Torres has been working for NRCS since 2010 and a NOPHNCSE member since 2011.

## News from Around the Regions

In each issue of *La Voz* we would like to feature news from each region. Tell us about the exciting things happening in your area. Spotlight a new member. Share your volunteer experience. Tell us what is unique about your state. We want to hear from you! Work with your regional representative to ensure your region is featured in each issue of *La Voz*.

### CARIBBEAN AREA

*Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands*

#### Common Weeds in Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands

The main objective of this bilingual publication is to present an updated inventory of weeds as the latest source of this information was published by Lugo Torres and Semidey Laracuente in 2002. Included are 184 species that have been selected among the most important in the Caribbean Area, in terms of frequency and difficulty to manage. We include information that will help to identify weeds: shrubs, trees, vines and other species considered invasive, all of which are associated with agricultural lands, pastureland, industrial and urban sites, roads and other places where they are not welcome.

#### Malezas Comunes en Puerto Rico e Islas Vírgenes Americanas

Esta publicación tiene como objetivo principal presentar un inventario de malezas más completo que el inventario presentado por Lugo Torres y Semidey Laracuente en 2002. Se incluyen 184 especies seleccionadas entre las más importantes en el Área del Caribe, desde la perspectiva de su frecuencia y la dificultad para manejarlas. Se provee información para identificar plantas arvenses, arbustos, árboles, bejucos y especies consideradas como invasoras, las cuales están asociadas a terrenos agrícolas, pasturas o pastizales, zonas urbanas e industriales, carreteras y otros lugares en donde son deseadas.



This bilingual publication was featured on the [NRCS website](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov).

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### EAST REGION

*Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and Virginia*



#### NOPHNRCSE Lifetime Member Zenik Crespo

I have been a NOPHNRCSE member since 2008. I truly believe in the mission of this organization and that is why in 2011, I became a lifetime member. Here is a little about me:

I was born in Las Marias, Puerto Rico, a beautiful town located on the west side of the island, and raised on a small family farm with my parents (Mariano and Zenaida) and two younger brothers (Mariano and Jose). Mariano graduated from college last May, and studied agricultural education. Jose is in his third year of college and studying political science.

In 1999 I started working towards my bachelor's degree in civil engineering at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez Campus, and shortly thereafter I decided to join the United States Army Reserve. In January 2000 I put my college education on hold to attend basic training, and in February 2003 my unit got mobilized to Iraq. I spent a year and a half there and worked with the Supply and Services Battalion. It was a very interesting personal and professional experience. When I came back in 2004, I continued with my education but in another field. In December 2007 I finished my degree in agricultural mechanical technology.

In January 2008 I started my NRCS career as a soil conservationist in Sparta, Wisconsin, and was transferred to Chippewa County in 2010. I had the opportunity to work with excellent people on conservation plans, HEL determinations, field and construction checks, EQIP contracts and many other projects.

Presently, I am the District Conservationist in Malone, New York, a position I have held since February 2011. Malone is located in Franklin County and considered one of northern New York's most historic communities. It is situated within ten miles of the U.S.-Canadian border to the north, and the scenic Adirondack Park to the south. Almost two-thirds of Franklin County is part of the Adirondack Park. Covering some 6.1 million acres, Adirondack Park is the largest park and the largest state-level protected area in the contiguous United States. It is also the largest landmark.

I am the NRCS designated conservationist working with tribal responsibilities. Here in Malone County we have the Saint Regis Mohawk Indian Reservation—or the Akwesasne by its Mohawk name. The reservation is adjacent to the Akwesasne Reserve in Ontario and Quebec. The Mohawk consider the entire community to be one unit.

I am also the New York Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager, a position I have held since last year. This position has given me the opportunity to meet a lot of people and also to learn more about Civil Rights not only in New York, but also at the national level.

I like to read; and in my spare time I love to visit new places and try new things. There are many places to go and a variety of things to do. I have a dog, Neo. We love to play together and take long walks. I also enjoy spending time in the kitchen—mixing things up and creating new recipes—especially for my husband to try!



## MIDWEST REGION

*Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota,  
Missouri, Ohio and Wisconsin*

### Chippewa Valley Wisconsin Field Offices Partner to do Outreach to Historically Underserved Customers

by Brunilda Velez, District Conservationist, Wisconsin



Wisconsin diversity is rich with different cultures from around the world. There are 22 recognized Native American tribes in Wisconsin as well as people with German, Scandinavian, Irish, Hispanic and Asian heritage. Locally, our field offices are reaching out to the growing community of Hmong farmers. The Hmong are an ethnic group from Asia who came to Wisconsin from regions like China, Laos, Vietnam and Thailand. Many came as refugees after the Vietnam War, and brought with them their agricultural skills.

If you visit a local Farmers Market, you will soon learn that there are many Hmong families that depend on agriculture as one of their sources of income. With that in mind, NRCS, Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the University of Wisconsin-Extension, partnered to reach out and help the Hmong community learn about the opportunities and services that are available to them. Our most successful event took place on February 14, 2013, when the local NRCS, FSA, and University of Wisconsin-Extension staff from Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire counties held an educational event.

Ka Ying Vang, Asian American/Pacific Islanders (AAPI) Special Emphasis Program Manager, was available to translate all topics into Hmong for this event. Some of the topics discussed included:

- Farm Bill Programs
- Conservation Practices
- Plant and Nutrient Management
- Financial Assistance

In the afternoon, the field office staff divided into small groups and assisted participants one-on-one with questions and concerns related to their EQIP applications. From this event, we received eight different applications for seasonal high tunnels which were all selected for funding for EQIP in 2013. Because of the success of this event, NRCS will be partnering with the Chippewa Valley Technical College and the Farley Center for another educational event this spring.

## NORTHERN PLAINS REGION

*Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska,  
North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming*

### Top 10 Facts about Hispanics in Montana

Submitted by: Lori Valadez, NRCS Public Affairs Specialist, Montana

Source: [Hispanic Leadership Network](#), June 4, 2012

The Hispanic Leadership Network released its "Top 10 Facts about Hispanics in Montana." Below are some interesting facts about Hispanics in Big Sky Country.

- Montana's Hispanic population is 28,565, or approximately 3 percent of the state's total population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).
- From 2000 to 2010, Montana's Hispanic population grew by an estimated 58 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).
- There are 15,000 Hispanic eligible voters in Montana, which constitute 2 percent of all eligible voters in the state (Pew Hispanic Center, 2010).
- Among the Hispanic population in Montana, 94 percent are native-born while 6 percent are foreign-born (Pew Hispanic Center, 2010).
- The median age for Hispanics in Montana is 24, whereas the median age of Non-Hispanic Whites is 42 (Pew Hispanic Center, 2010).
- In Montana, 25 percent of Hispanics do not have health insurance, whereas 25 percent of Non-Hispanic Whites are uninsured (Pew Hispanic Center, 2010).
- The 2011 annual average for Hispanic unemployment in Montana was 12 percent (U.S. Department of Labor, 2012).
- In Montana, 24 percent of Hispanic adults 25 to 64 years old have earned an associate degree or higher (Lumina Foundation for Education, 2012).
- In 2010, the purchasing power of Hispanics in Montana totaled \$650.3 million; an increase of 661 percent since 1990 (Selig Center for Economic Growth, 2010).
- Montana's 1,131 Hispanic-owned businesses had sales of \$161 million and employed 2,436 people in 2007 (U.S. Census Bureau Survey of Business Owners, 2010).



## SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas

### Texas NRCS–Partnerships and Outreach



Texas Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager for NRCS, Flavio Garza, visits with one of the attendees at the MAFO conference. MAFO is a national partnership of farmworker and rural organizations.



Texas State Conservationist Salvador Salinas shared information about technical and financial opportunities for beginning farmers/rancher, socially disadvantaged and organic producers at the MAFO annual conference in San Antonio in March.



Fernando Garza, district conservationist in Bexar County, works with the Lopez family with conservation efforts on their family ranch in San Antonio. The Lopez family are members of the American Indians of Texas Dance Theatre of San Antonio.

## SOUTHEAST REGION

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia

### Introducing Luis Cruz-Arroyo

by Carolyn King, Southeast Regional Representative

Luis Cruz-Arroyo was born and raised in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico. Ever since he can recall he had a great interest in science and animals, and he wanted to become a veterinarian. He got accepted to the University of Puerto Rico as a pre-veterinary student. Like some college students, his interest shifted and he decided to transfer to the animal science major. He developed an interest in research being able to present one abstract, four proceedings and one publication. After graduation he pursued a master's degree in animal nutrition. During this time, he taught the Basic Animal Science, Small Ruminants, Animal Nutrition and Veterinary Physiology laboratories, and presented three more abstracts and three technical newsletters. While still pursuing his master's degree, Luis and some of his closest friends started a company and landed contracts with environmental engineering firms and other groups to do research in by-product recycling and management. He also worked for Pioneer Hi-Bred Seedling in their experimental facility in Salinas, Puerto Rico, mainly doing field work and managing laboratory personnel. In 2010, an opportunity came up with NRCS. Luis put his graduate studies on hold, applied for a job with NRCS, and was hired as a soil conservationist in Baldwin County, Ala. He worked as the acting District Conservationist in Monroe County and as District Conservationist in Clarke and Washington counties, Ala. Luis has been part of the NRCS family for three years and was recently appointed as the resource conservationist for the west team in Alabama. He now resides in Jackson, Ala., with his wife Erika, who also works with NRCS as an engineering technician.

When Luis was hired on with NRCS, he came to Baldwin County, which is my home county. From day one he was very professional and enthusiastic. I saw immediately he would excel in the agency. I introduced him to NOPHNRCSE and he was interested in becoming a member and volunteered to serve in any capacity. Just recently, he has volunteered to serve on the Facebook, eBay, and Ad hoc committees. He truly is an asset to NRCS and NOPHNRCSE.

Luis, we congratulate you on your success and look forward to working with you!



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## WEST REGION

Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho,  
New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Washington

### Hispanic History in Hawaii

**Submitted by:** Kara Nelson, NRCS Resource Conservationist and  
Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager, Pacific Islands Area

Source: [www.HawaiiHispanicNews.org](http://www.HawaiiHispanicNews.org)

Did you know the first documented presence of a Hispanic in the Hawaiian Islands was that of Don Francisco de Paula Marin, a 20-year-old Spanish sailor? He deserted a Spanish naval ship in the U.S. Northwest, arrived in the islands on the Lady Washington, and became a resident of Honolulu in 1793 or 1794.

Don Francisco was from Jerez de la Frontera—an agricultural part of southern Spain. He was, therefore, very familiar with the medicinal uses of plants and herbs. He got here just as King Kamehameha I was uniting the individual Hawaiian kingdoms (islands) into one kingdom.

Due to Marin's extensive knowledge of medicinal uses of plants and herbs, he soon came to the attention of the king. He became the Kamehameha's business advisor, bookkeeper, sometimes physician, and interpreter. Through service to the king and the ali'i (royalty) he soon acquired land and wealth.

Marin loved to collect plants and soon turned his hobby into a "ship supply" business. He provided fresh fruits and vegetables to the crews of foreign ships that had started arriving at Honolulu Harbor in the late 1700s.

Despite being a skilled businessman, today Marin is best remembered for his green thumb. He was responsible for introducing many of the food plants we have in the islands: apples, apricots, asparagus, avocados, cabbage, carrots, chile pepper, eggplant, lemons, limes, macadamia, nectarines, nuts, olives, onion, oranges, parsley, peas, peaches, pears, potatoes, rice, tea and tobacco.

## Map Unit Descriptions Available in Spanish on Web Soil Survey

**by** Linda Greene, ACES enrollee, National Soil Survey Center, Lincoln, Nebraska

In an ongoing effort to meet our customers' needs, NRCS has translated into Spanish the map unit descriptions available as soil reports on the Web Soil Survey. The Web Soil Survey is one of the agency's primary methods for delivering soil survey data. The translations are produced through scripted programming and are available for every USDA-certified soil survey in the United States. The translations were conducted by bilingual soil scientists across the country.

The Web Soil Survey generates reports of map unit descriptions in tabular and narrative format. The database elements and the template structure were translated for both formats. This project was coordinated by the National Soil Survey Center. The Web Soil Survey is the largest USDA Web outreach site. It receives more than 100,000 visitors a month, and more than 190,000 custom soil survey reports were prepared in 2012. The Web Soil Survey continues to grow in popularity due to its high responsiveness to customer needs and is now prepared to serve an even larger audience through this bilingual effort.

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Articles may be sent via email as either an MS Word attachment saved as text only, or pasted directly into your email message.

Photographs should be emailed as a separate jpg attachment. Please include a caption for each photo submitted.

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The deadline for submitting articles for the summer issue of **La Voz** is June 30, 2013.