

Local Working Group Meeting – Conducted for USDA Program Compliance – 07/28/2016-  
1:30 to 3:30 pm; plus individual interviews on 07/27/2016 and 07/28/2016

Notes compiled by Pam Sablan-Aguon

Meeting attendance and interviewed individuals:

Solly Takai-Nakamura (Northern Marianas College-CREES); Gardner DLS. Barcinas (DLNR/Luta SWCD Chair); Antonio Mesngon (Rota Mayor's Office); Ron H. Ogo (Department of Fire-EMS); Valerie Atalig (Commerce); Anthony A. Atalig (DPL); Sean Songsong (DPL-Compliance); Pamela Sablan Aguon (USDA-NRCS)

Interviewed: JSanNicolas (Rancher); DPL Staff-Surveyors (5)

*The attendees/interviewees indicated that their resource concerns/issues are as follow in order of priority.*

***Noxious/Invasive Species Control; Pasture Health/Condition; Water Quality; Food Safety; Water Quantity; Infrastructure Upgrades; Land Availability and Accessibility; Use of Locally Available Materials and Supplies; and Equipment Availability and Services***

- *Noxious and invasive species spreading*
  - *Management and control of noxious and invasive species within forestlands*
  - *Control/eradication of noxious and invasive species within pasture lands*
- *Pasture Health and Condition*
  - *Forage health and vigor within pastures*
- *Water Quality*
  - *Certain Ag. Operations are located in areas within Rota that has the steep slopes where farming practices are causing soil to runoff from their farmlands causing sedimentation to occur in streams and nearby waters*
  - *Major concern with this is the Animal Wastes in piggery operations has no form of manure management in place*
  - *Pesticides applications are being applied improperly*
- *Water Quantity*
  - *Some areas where farming and ranching are located do not have water available for their crops/livestock use*
- *Food Safety*
  - *As it relates to use of pesticides on crops. Nobody is monitoring when was the pesticide last applied and are they being washed/prepared to meet safety measures for human consumption*
- *Infrastructure Upgrades*
  - *Perimeter fence (program eligibility for repairs for functionality) – protection from deer and repairs of their existing perimeter fence to restore functionality*
  - *Program requirements of cross-fencing – use locally available materials*
  - *Availability of required fence materials – Ranchers wanted to know if they could use locally available tree species and how to process those trees if approved for use so that it'll meet the program requirements or specifications.*
- *Land Availability and Accessibility*
  - *Longer term leases was mentioned that instead of 5 years it may be 10 years with CPA-Ag. Grazing Permits and DPL-Ag. Grazing Permits*
  - *Thinning out secondary forests to open up areas for more forage for livestock*
- *Locally Available Materials not only restricted to fencing but including supplies locally available at hardware stores or other source of supply companies within the island*
- *Equipment Availability and Services*
  - *Hard to keep up w/ maintenance of pasture and complete projects due to lack of equipment availability*