

PRESS RELEASE

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UOG awarded \$5 million to advance climate-friendly agriculture, forestry systems

A \$5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture has been awarded to the University of Guam to work with forestry managers and farmers to produce commodities using more environmentally friendly and sustainable practices.

UOG and its partners on the project — government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and farmers — will test climate-smart commodities and work toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions in agriculture and forestry systems. The project will also develop solutions to make local commodities more marketable and affordable for island communities.

USDA defines climate-smart commodities as produce and other products, such as fruits, vegetables, livestock, and lumber, that were cultivated or raised through practices that achieve reductions on greenhouse gas and carbon emissions. Some of these practices may include reforestation, wetlands management, soil conservation, and planting of cover crops.

“This is an excellent opportunity to improve precision agriculture for disadvantaged, at-risk island communities to improve food and nutrition security,” said Dr. Romina King, the project’s principal investigator. “We will be working with an interdisciplinary team of farmers, forestry and soil experts, agricultural specialists, and economists at UOG and GovGuam to find more efficient ways to produce commodities while reducing emissions.



We will also aim to improve sales of these local commodities and better connect farmers with buyers.”

King is an associate professor of geography with the Western Pacific Tropical Research Center under UOG’s College of Natural and Applied Sciences, associate director of NASA Guam Space Grant and NASA Guam EPSCoR program, and the UOG lead for the Pacific Islands Climate Adaptation Science Center. King also serves as the vice chair for the Government of Guam Climate Change Resilience Commission.

“I applaud Dr. King and the team behind this critical project and their initiative to bring together agencies, organizations, and local farmers to work as partners on how we can best adapt to a changing environment,” UOG President Anita Borja Enriquez said.

The project will offer technical workshops to farmers and forestry managers to showcase climate-smart practices and their benefits for underserved producers and landowners. Grants will be provided to farmers willing to test and incorporate these practices. Market research will be conducted to determine buyers’ willingness to pay for climate-smart commodities. A key output of the project will be the development of accurate and affordable methods to measure carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide emissions suitable for the conditions in the Western Pacific.

“We are very pleased to expand the CNAS research portfolio to include a novel project that will directly benefit farmers and other community members,” said Dr. Adrian Ares, associate director for research at WPTRC and one of the project’s co-principal investigators. “The grant came after an excellent collaborative effort that entailed solving complex conceptual challenges and engaging highly motivated farmers.”

The project is one of [141 selected projects](#) across the United States funded by the USDA’s Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities program totaling \$3.1 billion. This funding opportunity is intended to expand U.S. markets for climate-smart commodities and provide meaningful benefits to production agriculture.

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Photos:
Romina King

Triton Farms
An orthomosaic map of the Yigo Triton Research Farm in Guam, as seen on Dec. 2, 2022.