



CUSTOMS & QUARANTINE AGENCY, GUAM

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Director's Office

*Director of Customs – James T. McDonald
Acting Chief of Customs – Major Darlene R. Merfalen*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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USDA Funds Support CQA Mission



BARRIGADA, GUAM – The Customs and Quarantine Agency's (CQA) Agriculture Canine Unit recently purchased a 2016 Ford Transit Connect Cargo Van with funding from the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Development Service, Community Facilities Grant Program.

CQA was made aware of USDA's RD funding opportunities through its close collaboration with local USDA officials: Joseph Diego, USDA AREA Director for Guam and Anthony Barcinas, USDA Business Program Specialists for Guam. Each have been instrumental in assisting the unit secure USDA funding.

CQA's Biosecurity Taskforce Supervisor, Lt. Joey Cruz, says that the unit is fortunate to have their federal counterparts' support, "it is due to their support that the unit is able to operate and function efficiently and effectively."

Funding allowed for the purchase of a vehicle, decals, and vehicle kennels to transport canines to

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and from areas of operation at the amount of \$28,750.00.

Prior to acquiring the vehicle, the unit did not have a vehicle of its own and relied on borrowing one from CQA's Drug Detector Dog Unit. This purchase alleviates operational restraints for both units and allows each better protection of our borders.

Since 2014, the Ag. K-9 Unit has steadily received USDA, Animal and Plant Inspection Service, Plant Protection and Quarantine Program funding which pays for their entire operation, less employee salaries. This includes: officer/canine training, purchase of agriculture K-9s, training aids, dog food, vet services and other costs incurred to operate.

In fact, the Agriculture K-9 Unit was named CQA's Unit of the Year two years running due to the teams' reliability and high seizure rates.

For more information, please contact our Public Information Officer Ms. Jessi Santos at (671) 475-6202 or email jessi.santos@cqa.guam.gov.

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