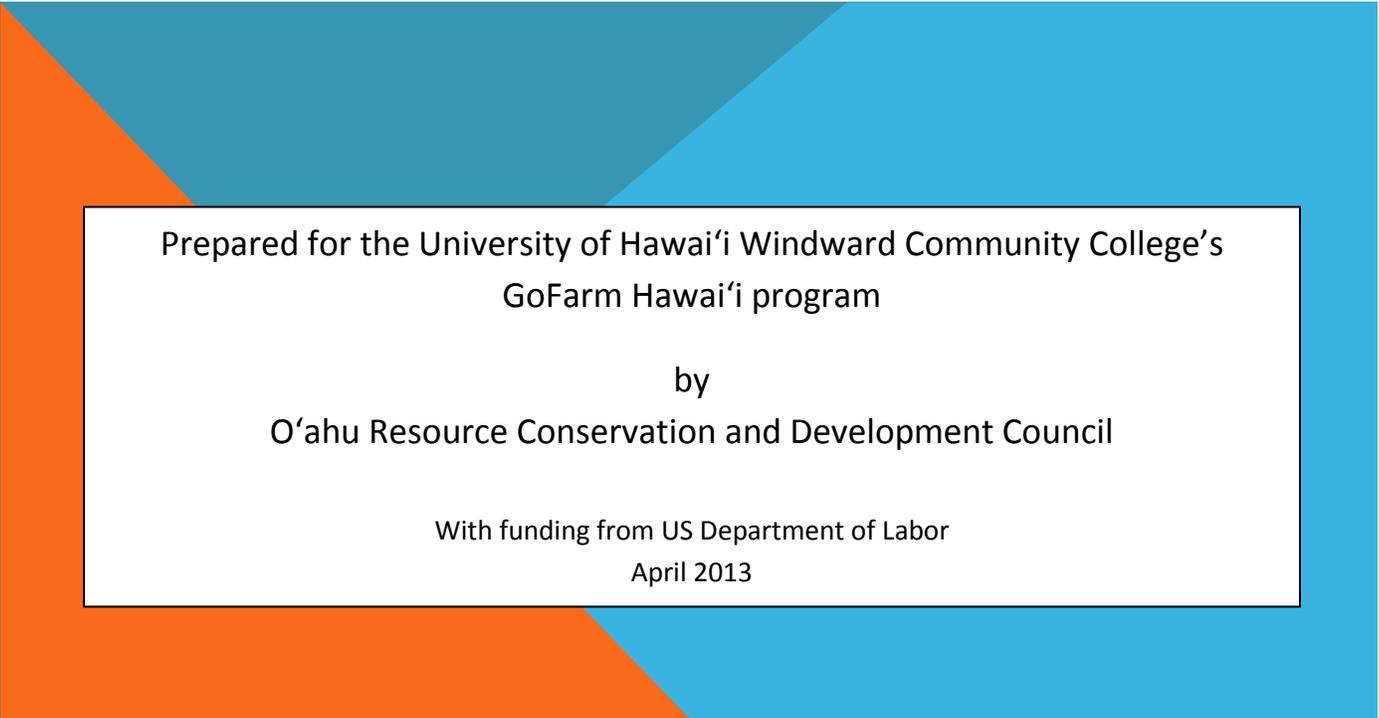




# Hawai'i Guide for New Farmers:

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How to make your first farm a success



Prepared for the University of Hawai'i Windward Community College's  
GoFarm Hawai'i program

by  
O'ahu Resource Conservation and Development Council

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## Introduction

Congratulations on your interest in starting your own agribusiness! The decision to become a farmer or rancher is not a light one and involves many variables and a lot of effort. With this guidebook, we hope to make the process here in Hawai'i clearer so those interested in farming will understand the work involved. For those willing to put in the effort, we hope this guide will ease your transition from interested party to agribusiness owner.

At the beginning, we have included a list of key service providers to provide a quick glance reference list. Many of these resources are mentioned again under sections related to the services they offer. A checklist is also included so you can keep track of your progress as you go through the steps. At the end of the guide, as well as throughout, there are useful websites or organizations listed that can further help you make your farming venture a success.



Images of Hawai'i's diverse agriculture industry are included throughout this guidebook.

Note: Efforts were made at the time of publication to ensure accurate information and up-to-date listings for resources and organizations mentioned in this guidebook. Due to the dynamic nature of websites, we cannot guarantee that all websites will be active in the future. Updated information, including any errors or omissions, should be sent to O'ahu RC&D at [admin@oahurcd.org](mailto:admin@oahurcd.org).

# Key Agriculture Service Providers in Hawai'i

## Government and University Programs:

### University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR)

Website: <http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/site/>

*Services offered:*

Cooperative Extension Service: <http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/site/extprograms.aspx>

Farmer's Bookshelf: <http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/fb/>

- Free publications and information regarding various crops
- Many links to other sources of information, including research stations and local crop societies

Agribusiness Education Training and Education Program:

<http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/agincubator/>

- Help develop strategic plan
- Help develop and implement business plan
- Planning and project management services
- Financial and operational performance analysis

Sustainable and Organic Agriculture Program: <http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/sustainag/>

- Information on various agribusiness topics, including marketing and selling, agtourism, value-added products, and more
- Information on sustainable and organic production techniques

Agriculture Diagnostic Service Center: <http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/site/adsc.aspx>

- Plant disease analysis
- Soils testing and analysis
- Insect pest identification
- Plant tissue analysis
- Water and nutrient testing and analysis

### State of Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA)

Website: <http://hdoa.hawaii.gov/>

*Services offered:*

- Manages Agricultural Parks, sometimes has leases available
- Some funding for grants or cost-share
- Last-resort loan program



### **US Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency (USDA-FSA)**

National website:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=landing&topic=landing>

Hawai'i website:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/stateoffapp?mystate=hi&area=home&subject=landing&topic=landing>

*Services offered:*

- Farm loans
- Reimbursement for transportation cost program
- Conservation programs
- Natural disaster loan assistance

### **USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS)**

National website: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov>

Pacific Islands Area website: <http://www.pia.nrcs.usda.gov>

*Services offered:*

- Grant and cost-share programs for implementing conservation and best management practices
- Conservation plan development
- Technical assistance

### **USDA Rural Development (USDA-RD)**

National website: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>

Hawai'i website: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/HI-Home.html>

*Services offered:*

- Business Loans and Grants
- Cooperative Grants
- Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG)

### **Small Business Administration**

National Website: <http://www.sba.gov>

Hawai'i Directory: <http://www.sba.gov/local-assistance/HI/local-resources>

Hawai'i Partner (Hawai'i Small Business Development Center) Website: <http://www.hisbdc.org/>

*Services offered:*

- Business consulting, including help writing strategic and business plans
- Market research and analysis
- Workshops and seminars including tips for starting and managing a business
- Guaranteed loans (backs your loan so it's easier to obtain)

## Local non-profit organizations:

### Hawai'i Agriculture Research Center (HARC)

Website: <http://www.harc-hspa.com>

*Services offered:*

- Micropropagation of healthy plant stock
- Pesticide registration and application training
- Environmental compliance training
- Surface and ground water monitoring
- Technical literature searches (current research on your crop)

### Hawai'i Farm Bureau

Website: <http://hfbf.org>

*Services offered:*

- Farmer's Markets
- Insurance
- Pesticide License classes
- Discounts at various agricultural suppliers

### Kohala Center

Website: <http://www.kohalacenter.org>

*Services offered:*

- Beginning farmer training program
- Grant and loan application assistance
- Help forming cooperatives with other producers



### O'ahu Resource Conservation and Development Council (O'ahu RC&D)

Website: <http://www.oahurcd.org>

*Services offered:*

- Workshops and training
- Conservation plan development
- Fiscal sponsorship and administrative services

### Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Website: <http://www.nacdnet.org/hawaii/>

*Services offered:*

- Cooperative agreements (first step to getting a conservation plan)
- Technical Assistance

# New Farmer Checklist

	Projected Completion Date	Done	N/A
1. Defined goals	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Developed necessary skills	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Developed a strategic plan	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Developed a business plan	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Permits, Licenses, and Business Documentation			
a. Business registered with State	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Business registered with Federal Government	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Grubbing permit or Conservation Plan	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Building permit	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Signage permit	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Insurance	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Pesticide applicator's license	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Dealer's license	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Food safety certification (optional)	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Organic certification (optional)	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Secured Capital	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Secured land			
a. Lease/mortgage/title documents	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Marketing			
a. Completed market research	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Developed positioning	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Developed brand	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## **Step 1: Define Your Goals.**

Becoming a farmer is a wonderful goal to have, but farming means different things to different people. You will need to make a lot of smaller, results-driven goals in order to successfully start your agribusiness and become the kind of farmer you want to be. Most of your goals will fit into four main categories: personal goals, economic goals, community goals, and environmental goals. As you make goals in each of these four areas, the type of agribusiness you want to have and ways to make your business a success will become clearer.

When making goals, make sure they're specific and have an end-date. Giving yourself a time-frame and picturing what you'll have achieved by that time solidifies the goal. Goals should be based on reality. If you have no idea what's attainable, do some research. Look online or ask other farmers at what point they turned a profit, how much time they put in, etc. You can give yourself either more or less time, but it's helpful to have a starting point.

The following are just some of many questions you may want to ask yourself as you begin to make goals. Good goals will motivate you and help you channel your enthusiasm in the right direction. The goals you make now will shape your agribusiness and give you a good starting point for developing a strategic plan and a business plan later on.

### **Personal**

Personal goals include thinking about why you want to farm and what you want to accomplish through farming. Consider the following questions and come up with others that will help you define what kind of farmer you want to be and what kind of farm or agribusiness you want to have.

What do you like about farming?

Do you want to farm as a hobby or as a large producer?

Is this an opportunity to allow your family to work together?

Do you want to provide all your family's produce and sell some on the side as well?

Do you want to provide healthy food to the disadvantaged?

Do you want your agribusiness to expand and be your main source of income?

How much time do you want to spend on the business?

As you make personal goals, inventory the skills you possess (technical or practical knowledge, drive, physical health, family support, etc.). Make a list of necessary skills you lack and set goals to fill in those gaps through education, technical advice, trained farm hands, or other means.

## **Economic**

As you make economic goals for yourself and your agribusiness, inventory your existing resources, income and expenses. Estimate what you will need to start and base your economic goals off those numbers. Think about how much you are willing to spend, how much debt you're willing to accrue, when you'll need to start receiving net income, and whether or not you're financially able to weather a disaster or bad production year.

## **Environmental**

Farming, depending on how it is done, can have a potentially negative or positive effect on the environment. You may not even have land yet for your farm. In that case, think about the natural resources on a property before you buy or lease. Consider the following questions:

- What will you do to minimize or negate negative effects?
- What natural or cultural resources are in the area and how will you maintain them?
- Will you practice traditional, organic, or natural farming?
- Will you develop a conservation plan for your farm?
- Is the land steep enough that erosion will be a problem?
- Is there a stream nearby that could be contaminated by fertilizers or pesticides?
- Are there endangered or nesting birds in the area?
- What can you do to protect valuable ocean resources?



## **Community**

Farming is not an isolated enterprise. Your neighbors and community will probably be observing your operation. They may even be part of your market or labor pool, so it is important to develop and maintain good relations with them. How will you do so? Think about how your business will help the community. What local businesses and organizations will you support as you build your business and expand your own resources?

## **Resources for defining your goals**

This section is adapted from a helpful factsheet for new farmers developed by the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES):

<http://www.mosesorganic.org/attachments/MOSES%20fact%20sheet/20ResourcesBeginningFarmer.pdf>

## Step 2: Develop Necessary Skills.

As you made goals and inventoried your skills and resources, you probably identified some skills you're lacking that would be useful in your agribusiness. Perhaps you know how to grow crops, but you have no experience with running a business. Maybe you're an entrepreneur, but you've only ever grown a backyard garden. Luckily, there are many options for gaining the skills you need to make your farm a success. Many opportunities are here in Hawai'i, some on the mainland. In this section, we outline some options for developing skills and widening your knowledge base.

### College classes

Many colleges and universities have agricultural education programs. University of Hawai'i's College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) has a list of educational institutions and organizations that offer classes on topics related to farming. Some require enrollment, some don't. A current list can be found here:

<http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/sustainag/NewFarmer/FAQ.asp#interested>.

### Field days/workshops

Several organizations offer field days, on-the-farm workshops that last anywhere from a few hours to a few days. These field days cover a wide variety of topics related to farming and usually showcase a farm that has had success in the topic covered. Field days offer farmers and other agribusiness owners a great way to network and get answers to questions from people with on-the-farm knowledge.



O'ahu Resource Conservation and Development Council offers business trainings, Master Farmer Workshops, and other workshops: <http://www.oahurcd.org>

The University of Hawai'i (UH)'s Sustainable and Organic Agriculture Program publishes a bi-monthly newsletter that highlights upcoming workshops and other agricultural news: <http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/sustainag/news/index.html>

### Training programs

A training program offers guided help through the beginning farming process and provides an opportunity for new farmers to network both with other new farmers and with established

farmers. They can be from a few days to several months long. There are several good training opportunities on the mainland, and we have some good programs here in Hawai'i.

GoFarm Hawai'i, a non-profit cooperative effort of numerous colleges and organizations on O'ahu, has a new farmer training program for those interested in farming on O'ahu:

<http://www.gofarmhawaii.org/programs.html>

Laulima Eco-friendly Alliance of Farms (LEAF)'s Aina Corps Organic Farming Training Program in Waimanalo on O'ahu seeks to train as organic farmers people who are unemployed or underprivileged. <http://leafhawaii.org/>

Kohala Center's Ku I Ka Mana: Beginning Farmer Training Program on the Big Island. Anyone interested in farming can fill out an application:

<http://kohalacenter.org/farmertraining/home.html>

UH Maui College has a New Farmers Institute for those interested in farming on Maui. Contact the program coordinator, Ann Emmsley, at 984-3243, or by email at [aemmsley@hawaii.edu](mailto:aemmsley@hawaii.edu).

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) hosts a yearly beginning farmer and rancher conference: <http://start2farm.gov/beginning-farmer-rancher-conference>

The National Farmers Union has a yearly New Farmer Institute, a three-part training program that includes both classroom and on-farm experiences:

<http://www.nfu.org/education/beginning-farmer-institute>

### **Internships/apprenticeships**

Internships and apprenticeships offer a way for those with minimal farming skills or knowledge gaps to get into farming. These opportunities allow you to gain experience working on a farm and developing knowledge and skills you can then use on your own farm. Generally, internships last only a few months and interns are often given only a few responsibilities. Apprenticeships are similar to internships, but they usually last a whole growing season and the apprentice is involved in many parts of the farm operation. An apprentice will often be involved in the whole process, from preparing for planting to harvesting and selling. Before accepting a position, it is important to talk to the farmer or producer. Find out what they need the most help with, but also let them know what skills you are hoping to gain. If possible, tour the farm and get to know other workers as well. The following are just a few websites that list available internship or apprenticeship positions:

- **ATTRA**, the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service, maintains a current list of internship opportunities: <https://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/internships/>
- **Backdoorjobs.com** maintains several directories of available short-term jobs, including a directory devoted to farming: <http://www.backdoorjobs.com/farming.html>
- **Beginningfarmers.org** is an online compilation of information and resources related to farming. It is maintained by Taylor Reid, a Doctoral Student and policy-maker at Michigan State University and keeps an updated list of job and internship opportunities: <http://www.beginningfarmers.org/internship-and-employment-opportunities/>
- **The Farm-based Education Network** lists farm jobs, internships, and apprenticeships on their website: <http://www.farmbasededucation.org/forum/categories/job-postings/listForCategory?sort=mostRecentDiscussions>

### **WWOOFing**

Those that are interested in organic farming can get some on-farm experience as a WWOOFer, a World-Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms worker. There are organic farms on most of the islands that will provide food and sometimes lodging in exchange for work on the farm. Some opportunities are similar to internships, but be aware that some farmers are just looking for inexpensive weed-pulling labor. In order to make sure you'll be getting the experience you want, visit the farm and talk to the owner and other WWOOFers. The website <http://woofhawaii.org/> lists organic farms in Hawai'i looking for workers and also rates the farms based on past WWOOFer reviews. Besides the website, another good way to find a position is to attend local farmers markets and talk to the farmers. Many farmers would rather hire someone with whom they've had a face-to-face conversation than someone they've never met.



## Step 3: Develop a Strategic Plan and a Business Plan.

Strategic plans and business plans are representations of your agribusiness on paper. They demonstrate how you incorporate your goals, values and skills into the running of your business and how you plan to make that business a success.

### Strategic Plan

Developing a strategic plan helps keep you on track as you run your agribusiness and develop your business plan. It also guarantees your personal goals are the foundation for your business goals.

Questions to ask yourself:

1. What do we do?
2. Why do we do it?
3. For whom do we do it?
4. How can we be the best at it?

Identifying the farming industry's values, strengths and weaknesses and comparing your business's values, strengths and weaknesses can help you determine what your business has to offer and why or how you can be the best at what you do. It is important to revisit your strategic plan every so often to determine if your business is still heading in the direction you intended or if goals have changed.

### Business Plan

A business plan shows you and others that you can be successful by outlining the economic viability of your business. It is essential for getting a loan, but also for reaching your goals for your business.

Before you start on your business plan, you need to ask yourself some questions about your agribusiness:



What size of farm do you want?

What will you grow?

Who is your market (CSA / farmer's market / restaurants / grocery stores)?

How big is the market and is there potential for growth?

Is there competition?

Will agricultural tourism be part of your business?

Will you be making value-added products?

When you have a good idea of your business goals, you can begin your business plan. Many businesses include a mission statement and a vision statement as part of their business plan. A mission statement clearly defines the main goals or values of the company and how they will be achieved. It serves to keep the company on track. Sound familiar? Strategic plans frequently become the basis for a business's mission statement. A vision statement presents your vision of what your business will accomplish for your customers, industry, or community in the next five or ten years.

Elements of a business plan:

- Nature of your business (who you are, what you do, why you do it, how you do it, and what you expect to accomplish)
- How you generate profits
- What expenses your business has
- What your target market is
- How you will grow or expand your business

### **Resources for developing strategic or business plans**

Much of the information from this section came from the University of Hawai'i Agribusiness Incubator Program, which can help with developing a strategic plan and a business plan:

<http://aip.hawaii.edu/default.aspx>.

The Hawai'i Small Business Development Center also helps with plan development:

<http://www.hisbdc.org/>

There are many online tools as well. The University of Minnesota has developed an online program called AgPlan™ that helps agribusinesses develop industry-specific business plans:

<https://www.agplan.umn.edu/>.

## Step 4: Complying with Rules and Regulations

There are many farm-related laws and regulations in place to try to protect you, your workers, your neighbors, and the environment. In order to comply with rules and regulations in Hawai'i, you will need to apply for and be granted several permits, licenses, and other documentation. In this section, we list the most common documentation needed. Not all may apply to your agribusiness and there may be some we have not listed that you will need. Do your research, as missing documentation can result in fines or even halt work on your business.

### Zoning

Pay attention to zoning. Land you farm must be zoned for the type of agriculture you want to do. Make sure you know what kind of structures and activities are allowed on the land. You can check with your county's zoning or planning department for current zoning maps.



### Permits

Common permits needed in Hawai'i and where to apply:

- Building permit—City/County
- Sign permit—City/County. All signs of a certain size must be permitted.
- Grading/grubbing permit—City/County. If you will be moving much dirt or removing much vegetation in preparation for planting, a grading and grubbing permit is required.
- and/or Conservation Plan—Local Soil and Water Conservation District, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service(NRCS) or O'ahu Resource Conservation and Development Council (O'ahu RC&D). Some counties waive the grading and grubbing permit if the farmer has a current conservation plan that addresses grading and grubbing. NRCS, local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and O'ahu RC&D develop conservation plans for farmers who have become cooperators with their local Soil and Water Conservation District.

NOTE: Though not common, permits are always required to work next to or in streams or wetlands. Contact Hawai'i State Commission on Water Resource Management or the US Army Corps of Engineers if you will be working near a stream or wetland.

### Licenses

Common licenses needed in Hawai'i and where to apply:

- Pesticide applicator license—Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA). Certain pesticides are restricted and anyone using them must be trained and have a current license.
- Ownership and Movement Certificate or Dealer's License—HDOA Dealer Licensing Unit. In order to reduce agricultural theft, food producers must produce an Ownership and

Movement Certificate when asked and any non-producers dealing in agricultural commodities must obtain a Dealer's License.

- Food Safety Certification—Hawai'i Department of Health (CTAHR can get you ready for an audit: <http://manoa.hawaii.edu/ctahr/farmfoodsafety/>). Though not necessarily required, if you will have a packing plant or be selling to restaurants, a food safety certificate will help you be competitive.

### **Other requirements**

- Labor laws—There are both state and federal laws an employer must follow when hiring workers. Hawai'i's Department of Labor and Industrial Relations has a New Employer Packet that will help you understand and apply the laws, protecting you and your business from possible lawsuits or fines.
- Insurance—Insurance protects you from unknown potential risks, misfortunes, and disasters. The Small Business Administration, HDOA Risk Management, USDA Farm Service Agency, and USDA Risk Management Agency can all help you decide what kind of insurance is suitable for your particular agribusiness.
- Registration—Your business must be registered with both the State of Hawai'i and the federal government for tax and other purposes.
- Environmental Protection Agency—The following EPA document addresses major EPA laws and how they could affect agricultural producers:  
<http://www.epa.gov/agriculture/agmatrix.pdf>

### **Resources for Complying with Rules and Regulations**

HDOA Quality Assurance Divisions, which deals with most agriculture-related licenses and certifications: <http://hdoa.hawaii.gov/qad/commodities-branch/>

For zoning and permits, contact your city/county planning agency.

Honolulu City/County: <http://www.honoluludpp.org/>.

Hawai'i County: <http://www.cohplanningdept.com/>.

Maui County: <http://www.co.maui.hi.us/index.aspx?nid=1205>.

Kaua'i County: <http://www.kauai.gov/default.aspx?tabid=454>.

Hawai'i State Department of Labor and Industrial Relations New Employer Packet:

<http://labor.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/New-Employer-Packet-3-14-13.pdf>

Staffing agencies that staff farm laborers:

ALTRES: <http://www.altres.com>

## Step 5: Accessing Capital.

Loans and grants are the most common way of securing capital. Some farmers are able to borrow money from friends or family or interested investors. Not everyone is so lucky, but there are several other options for raising necessary funds.

### Loans

There are four main places to get commercial loans for agribusinesses.

1. Commercial banks and credit unions
2. Farm Credit Services of Hawai'i
3. USDA Farm Service Agency
4. Hawai'i Department of Agriculture

Be aware that #s 3 and 4 are “lenders of last resort,” meaning they only give loans to people who have written notices from banks saying the bank will not lend to them.

Common requirements for loans:

- Clear business plan
- Marketing plan
- Good credit history
- Organized, accurate, and up-to-date records, including:
  - Income/expense statements
  - Financial Statements
  - Tax returns



### Grants

Grants are particularly appealing, as you don't need to pay back money given you as you would with a loan. However, be aware that many grants require up front funding matches by the farmer and it takes time and effort to locate, apply for, and write reports for grants. Grants will rarely fund beginning ventures, but may be a way to expand your agribusiness after a few years in operation.

Common requirements for grants:

- Detailed and organized business records
- Clear purpose that matches the goal of the grant
- A clearly defined way to accomplish goal and a way to measure results
- Support from community members or partnerships

- Match for funding (amount for match varies widely between grants)
- Final Report detailing how grant funds were used and what was accomplished

### **Resources for accessing capital:**

USDA Farm Service Agency Lending Programs:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=fmlp&topic=landing>

USDA Rural Development offers loans and grants for a variety of agribusiness activities, from building farm labor housing to developing value-added products:

[http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/RD\\_Loans.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/RD_Loans.html) or [http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/RD\\_Grants.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/RD_Grants.html)

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service offers technical assistance and funding for easements and conservation practices:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/?&cid=stelprdb1048817>

Hawai'i Department of Agriculture's "last resort" loan program for those denied private sector loans: [http://hawaii.gov/hdoa/agl/agl\\_newfarm](http://hawaii.gov/hdoa/agl/agl_newfarm)

Feed the Hunger Foundation offers microloans to low Hawai'i farmers and agribusinesses involved in the local food system: <http://www.feed-hunger.com/>

Kohala Center, located on Hawai'i Island, offers grant and loan application assistance to farmers and agribusinesses throughout the state: <http://www.kohalacenter.org>

O'ahu RC&D, and most RC&D councils across the state, offer fiscal sponsorship opportunities: <http://www.oahurcd.org>

USDA's start2farm website lists information on financing, including organizations that offer microloans and information on federal funding programs:

<http://www.start2farm.gov/categories/financing>

## Step 6: Accessing Land.

Land for farming can be bought, rented, or leased. Which option you choose will depend greatly on your goals and the availability of land. Buying land is not necessarily the best option, especially for a beginning farmer. Your options for expansion may be limited and your market or goals for your farm may change.

### Buying

Currently, there is less agricultural land available in Hawai'i for purchase than there is for renting or leasing. Here are ways to find what's available:

- Classified ads—If you are wishing to buy land, look over the classified sections of newspaper and farm publications. Sometimes there are ads for properties.
- Realtors—Sometimes realtors will be aware of listings for agriculture land.
- Retiring farmer—If you know a farmer that is retiring and doesn't have children to take over the farm, he or she may be willing to sell in order to keep the land in farming.
- Approach owners—Look for land that is zoned for agriculture, but isn't currently in production. Find out who the owners are and ask if they are willing to sell.

### Renting/Leasing

Rented or leased land is usually more readily available and gives you the flexibility to develop your product and market base. There are several options for finding lands to rent or lease.

- Large land owner leases—Large land owners such as Kamehameha Schools lease agricultural land. They may know which of their tenants is willing to sub-lease smaller parcels of land for agricultural production.
- Agricultural Parks—Hawai'i Department of Agriculture maintains agricultural parks on all the islands. Ag Parks have a variety of parcel sizes that may be available for leasing.
- Retiring farmer—Retiring farmers not willing to sell their land may be willing to lease it.



### Resources for accessing land:

HDOA's Agricultural Resource Management Division: <http://www.hdoa.hawaii.gov/arm/>

## Step 7: Marketing.

In order to have a successful agribusiness, it is essential that you know who you are selling to and why they would want to buy your product.

### Identifying your market: Do your research

Identify your target market:

- Individual/business
- Location
- Family/business size
- Annual income/revenue
- Buying style (when, how much?)
- Ethnicity
- Values (convenience, quality, aesthetics, etc.)

Answering the following questions will help you determine whether or not your identified target market will be able to sustain your business:

- Can you easily identify your target market?
- Why would your target market want to buy from *you*?
- Do they have a need that isn't already being satisfied?
- Do you have a way to communicate with your target market?
- Is your target market large enough to support your sales goals?

If you're unsure, as you likely are, of the answers to any of the above questions, you will want to do more research and possibly get some help. UH-Manoa's Agribusiness Incubator Program, <http://aip.hawaii.edu/default.aspx>, and the Hawai'i Small Business Development Center, <http://www.hisbdc.org/>, can help you identify your target market, as well as help develop the next two steps in marketing, **positioning** and **branding**.

### Positioning

Positioning allows you to differentiate yourself from your competition and show your potential customers why your company is better to work with or your product is the best or most desirable.

1. Research your competition. What are they known for?
2. List the defining characteristics and strengths of your business.
3. Why would your target market choose your company or products over a competitor's?
4. Write a concise Positioning Statement that describes one or two things you want customers to associate with your agribusiness and products.

## Branding

Once you've decided on your positioning, emphasize it with your brand. You need to be the one who determines how your customers view your business. Your positioning, reinforced by your brand, will do that work for you. Design all of the following using your new positioning and brand:

- Company name/brand name
- Tagline/slogan
- Logo
- Color scheme
- Packaging
- Labels
- Advertising

*Example:* Kahuku Farms on O'ahu's North Shore uses positioning statements, logos, and taglines to distinguish their brand and share their story with customers. See more at <http://www.kahukufarms.com>



## Resources for Marketing

UH-CTAHR has a list of helpful marketing resources, including some specifically for Hawai'i: <http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/sustainag/links/agbusiness.html>

ATTRA has a list of tips for marketing and selling certain products and getting into markets: <https://attra.ncat.org/marketing.html>

## Helpful Websites

There are many, many online websites that provide a lot of great information and resources for those interested in starting their own farms or ranches. Some information applies to farmers throughout the United States, but some is region-specific or state-specific, so bear in mind when searching through these websites that not all information will apply to you or your business. We've listed just a few of the most thorough websites here.

The USDA has a website devoted to providing information and resources for beginning farmers: <http://www.start2farm.gov/>

ATTRA, the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service, has many publications and resources especially for beginning farmers that cover many farm business-related topics: [https://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/local\\_food/startup.html](https://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/local_food/startup.html)

University of Hawai'i at Manoa has a great list of resources for new farmers: <http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/sustainag/NewFarmer/index.html>

The New England Small Farm Institute is a non-profit dedicated to promoting small farm development. It provides extensive publications and resources for new farmers. Some are Northeast-specific, but some apply nationwide: [http://www.smallfarm.org/main/for\\_new\\_farmers/new\\_farmer\\_q\\_and\\_a/](http://www.smallfarm.org/main/for_new_farmers/new_farmer_q_and_a/)

Beginningfarmers.org is a website maintained by a Doctoral student at Michigan State University that is a clearinghouse for news and information related to farming, and specifically directed to new or beginning farmers: <http://www.beginningfarmers.org/>

*We wish you good luck and much success in your farming venture!*