



# GOFARM HAWAI'I

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I

ANNUAL REPORT

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2020



# GOFARM HAWAII MISSION

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GoFarm Hawai'i's mission is to enhance Hawai'i's food security and economy by increasing the number of sustainable, local agricultural producers. We do this by offering those with an interest in agriculture a combination of knowledge, experience, and support to reach their full potential.

## PROGRAM SUPPORT

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GoFarm Hawai'i secured the following financial support in 2020:

- January: 10-month grant from the Hawai'i Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.
- March: 15-month grant from Hawai'i Tourism Authority.
- July: 1-year grant from Kamehameha Schools.
- September: 3-year grant USDA NIFA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Grant.
- October: 2-month CARES Act funding through the City & County of Honolulu Coronavirus Relief Fund administered by the Hawai'i Community Foundation.
- November: 1-month CARES Act funding through the City & County of Honolulu Coronavirus Relief Fund administered by the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement.
- December: 1-year grant from Hawai'i Department of Agriculture.
- December: 5-year pledge from American AgCredit/CoBank.

## 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

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- In January, the AgBusiness Team visited multiple other training sites in California including the Center for Land-Based Learning and the Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association (ALBA) to share ideas.
- In February, the program completed its site set up at its new Hilo, Hawai'i site and started recruiting for the next cohort of students. A cohort of all military veteran participants was selected and a new collaboration with Ho'ola Veteran Services commenced.
- In March, the program adjusted to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic by:
  - Converting classroom sessions to online instruction
  - Implementing strict guidelines to keep in-person field instruction
  - Donating food grown through the program to community members in need
- In response to COVID-19, the program supported the industry as follows:
  - In March, the program introduced a [Find a Farmer tool](#) to help residents connect directly with local farmers.
  - In March, the program started collecting [resources for local farmers](#), including information relating to adjusting operations, marketing, and funding.
  - Held multiple webinars to provide education and information on funding and marketing.
- Piloted an AgXcel educational phase that combines the program's AgSchool and AgPro phases. This will allow participants to complete their education in a shorter amount of time and coupled with the Gap Year program, helps to fill the state's agricultural labor need.

- In April, AgBusiness workshops were held for the Maui Family Farmer Training Network students.
- Between June and August, a 7-workshop series including business and production webinars were held for beginning farmers who secured land with Mahi Pono on Maui. A similar series was held for Molokai and Lanai farmers participating in Sustainable Molokai's farmer training course.
- In July and August, a collaboration with the Hawai'i Tourism Authority started. Six workshops were held, offering education, a mini-grant opportunity, marketing support, and networking to promote increased agritourism activity throughout the state. Program collaborators included O`ahu RC&D and Hawai'i Agritourism Association.
- In July, the program introduced a Gap Year option to graduating students. The option allows and encourages graduates to continue their education by spending a year doing 500 hours of hands-on learning within the agricultural sector. After the year, the student has the option to obtain land from the program through the AgIncubator program.
- In August, the program started its second AgTechnician cohort at the Waiawa Correctional Facility. The certificate-based program is designed to teach fundamental agricultural labor skills so individuals can find agricultural-based employment after release. The program has been challenged by COVID-related impacts.
- In August, the program introduced a resource documenting agricultural educational pathways in Hawai'i. The resource provides a central place to find out about opportunities throughout the state. It also includes information about developing mentorship relationships.
- In November, the program started a 5-workshop series called GoFish Hawai'i. The collaboration between GoFarm Hawai'i, the Sustainable and Organic Agricultural Program, and UH Sea Grant college teaches how to integrate small-scale aquaponics into land-based production systems.
- In November, the program introduced a YouTube Video series that encourages community members to grow their own food, with episodes on specific fundamental skills.
- In November and December, the program offered multiple industry webinars relating to tax preparation and marketing.

## FUTURE PLANS

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The GoFarm Hawai'i team continues to make plans for improvement in the following ways:

- The program plans to host various educational workshops for agriculturalists across the state. This includes business support, marketing, and revenue-generating opportunities.
- Because land access continues to be an issue across the state, we plan to continue work to support the development of land pathways for graduates.
- Most participants have found the GFH network and access to continued support to be highly valuable. We are looking for ways to continually strengthen the network at each site and throughout the program.
- GFH plans to collaborate with the Maui Food Innovation Center to offer more food manufacturing training.

- The team plans to work with CTAHR to develop a new curriculum to support middle- and high-school teachers gain agricultural skills. Building teacher skills are essential and the foundation needed to increase the quality and availability of agricultural programs in local schools and encourage more youth to enter careers in the agricultural industry.

## PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

The following represent student feedback about the program:

- Exceeded my expectations. I really loved this program and wish I could continue through AgPro. The Coaches are really approachable with questions and very supportive even through our mistakes.
- Awesome program for beginner commercial farmers
- This program is outstanding! I started with very little knowledge of farm production, and as the course progressed, I realized how much I didn't know. But, this program was very educational, and provided a logical, systematic approach to establishing a small-scale production farm - from "cradle to grave." I feel confident that I now have the basic skills to set-up and maintain a small-scale farming operation on my property, and from that operation achieve a reasonable amount of success with providing fresh produce to customers.
- An amazing program. I've already recommended it to a lot of other people whom I think would be a great fit.
- I'm amazed how GoFarm put together an opportunity for someone with minimum experience to pursue a business in farming. I look forward to working with all your departments to help me be successful.
- GoFarm is a well-designed and coordinated program to cover a wide variety of topics about farming. Great farm coaches! They are very knowledgeable, experienced and they can make learning so much fun!
- I wish GoFarm was 10x the current size, it is such an awesome program, so well planned, and so needed right now.

## SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS



# PERFORMANCE

With 5 training sites across 4 islands (O'ahu, Hawai'i, Maui, and Kaua'i), we have trained over **400** aspiring farmers since 2013. We offer up to one year of formal classroom and experiential training in production and business topics. Over the past 3 years, approximately **70%** of graduates have gone on to start a farm business or work in the agricultural industry or food system.



With incubation land at most of our sites, advanced graduates have the opportunity to start a farm business on program land. Incubators get access to shared equipment and infrastructure, time to build markets and capital, production and business support, ability to refine their production skills, and business experience which increases the likelihood of success before making a large capital investment. Over the past 3 years, 49 individuals operated a farm business on program land. For the graduates that start farms on their own land, the program offers business support, continued learning opportunities, and a strong alumni network.



The GoFarm Hawai'i AgBusiness consulting program provides one-on-one support for new and existing farmers statewide with things like business and production planning, marketing, evaluation of revenue options (including value-added food production and agritourism), financial analysis and cost of production, feasibility analysis, and project planning. In 2020, the team consulted with **78** existing, new, and aspiring agribusinesses.



In 2019, we started an AgTechnician program at the Waiawa Correctional Facility to teach incarcerated adults basic agricultural skills. The program, designed to prepare graduates for farming-related employment upon release and reduce recidivism, started its third cohort in February 2021.



We conduct agribusiness training statewide. In 2020, we trained over **1,000** individuals on business-related topics in order to increase the number of financially viable farming operations that are able to provide income for themselves and employ others.

We also develop industry resources and tools! We've written the Hawai'i Agribusiness Guidebook, documented farm lease options, offer a land matchmaking database, and maintain an extensive list of resources.



The program continues to be in high demand. Between June and December 2020, **469** individuals have participated in the program's introductory phase (AgCurious) and **183** applications were submitted for 60 openings in the program's second phase (AgXposure).

Contact GoFarm Hawai'i at [info@gofarmhawaii.org](mailto:info@gofarmhawaii.org) or (808) 956-3530