



GOFARM HAWAI'I

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I

ANNUAL REPORT

2021



GOFARM HAWAII MISSION

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

GoFarm Hawai'i secured the following financial support in 2021:

- January: 3-year grant from USDA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative Education and Workforce Development Program.
- April: 1-year grant from Hawai'i Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.
- June: 2-year extension from Hawai'i Department of Public Safety.
- July: 1-year grant from Kamehameha Schools.
- August: 2-year grant from USDA NIFA Alaska Native-Serving and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions Education Competitive Grants Program.
- August: 1-year grant from Ulupono Foundation.
- August: Supplemental funding from USDA NIFA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Grant.
- December: year 2 of a 5-year pledge from American AgCredit/CoBank.
- Additional private donations from local organizations, graduates, and supporters.

2021 HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2021, 156 students participated in GoFarm Hawai'i beginning farmer training courses (AgXposure and beyond) and 14 new businesses started in the AgIncubator program.
- The GoFarm Hawai'i - Community Edition series was promoted throughout the year.
- In March, the first GoFish Hawai'i cohort graduated. GoFish Hawai'i is a collaboration between UH College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (UH CTAHR) programs: GoFarm Hawai'i and the Sustainable and Organic Agricultural Program, and UH Sea Grant College Program. The program teaches farmers how to integrate small-scale aquaponics into land-based production systems. Cohort 2 will be starting in the first quarter of 2022.
- The irrigation system was expanded on Kaua'i and can now support up to 12 additional AgIncubator farmers.



- The program piloted a value-added production course in collaboration with UH Maui College Food Innovation Center and is currently leveraging that knowledge to build a curriculum for other islands.
- Throughout 2021, the program hosted agritourism tours statewide to build agritourism capacity for the state. Collaborators included the Hawai'i Tourism Authority and O'ahu Resource Conservation & Development Council.
- Piloted multiple workshops which provide additional education for graduates, local farmers, and homesteaders. Topics have included tractors and implements, orchard planting and management, tomato production, fencing, composting, and greenhouse construction.
- Hosted a series of farmer-to-farmer mentorship virtual workshops to promote practical peer learning. Topics have included recordkeeping, organic certification, grant tips, veteran resources, and taxes.
- GoFarm Hawai'i became an authorized Farm Service Agency Borrower Training Vendor.
- In August and September, a 4-workshop series including business and production webinars were held for beginning farmers participating in Sustainable Molokai's farmer training course.
- The program has collaborated with the O'ahu Resource Conservation & Development Council to provide training sessions for the Hawai'i Women Farmers Network. The 8-month cohort training program provides technical support and accountability to help farmers increase their operation's efficiencies and profit.
- Throughout 2021, the program completed cohorts three and four of the AgTechnician program 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.
- Throughout 2021, the program collaborated with industry organizations to provide agribusiness workshops. Services were provided to the: Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA) KūHana Program, UH Maui College Summer AgTech Program, The Kohala Center Beginning Farmer program, and the HFUU Farmer Apprentice Mentoring (FAM) Program.
- The program collaborated with Kokua Hawai'i Foundation and Chef Hui to host a Lunch and Learn session designed to help farmers learn more about the food procurement process in schools.
- The program connected with landowners on Kaua'i, Maui, and O'ahu about land opportunities for graduates.
- Promoted graduates and local food through the [farmer profile series](#) and [GoFarm to Table lists](#).

FUTURE PLANS

The GoFarm Hawai'i team is continually working on new ways to support farmers. We hope to:

- Connect farmers and chefs to strengthen the commitment to local food purchasing.
- Collaborate with industry organizations to develop a series of educational videos that will be translated into a few other languages.
- Invest in shared-use equipment and facilities to improve infrastructure for program participants and new farmers.
- Develop a program to assist graduates with access to capital.
- Host various educational workshops for agriculturalists across the state to showcase scaling, market opportunities, and value-added collaborations.
- 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 GoFarm Hawai'i network and access to continued support to be highly valuable. We will continually look for ways to strengthen the network at each site and throughout the program.



PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Some excerpts from student exit surveys:

- I am very grateful that the program exists as it provides an affordable, hands-on opportunity to learn and understand what it means to farm locally in Hawai'i, especially at a smaller scale.
- Cannot recommend it enough! It was an absolutely fantastic program and the best part is the inspiration to continue not only farming and producing but learning as well.
- Excellent overall especially the mix of hands-on production experience and lecture time spent on financial and business considerations. I think the opportunity to visit so many local farms and ask the farmers questions was so valuable.
- I have learned so much and feel more prepared to take on farming as a career.
- Incredible course. The material was all-encompassing and well put together. From the lesson plan, course material, to the guest speakers.
- GoFarm has provided me enough learning to be FAR more successful than my previous attempts at growing market garden produce and also pushed me to scale up.

- It has bolstered me with more confidence to keep moving forward. As much as we have covered and learned, it also helped me find other or further areas to continue to explore.
- I am a lot more confident about my future. I gained so much experience and knowledge. The field trip to the farmers market, restaurants, and grocery store opened my eyes to how to be a better community member. The different perspectives of each participant in the cohort also broadened my perspective on methods of farming. I love the diversity of backgrounds!

QUOTES AND TESTIMONIALS

Some feedback about the program:

- "Our mission is to grow quality vegetables that are accessible and affordable. Our vision is a model of creative and sustainable agriculture. We are a strong believer in the necessity of food independence for our state. The solution is simple: we need to grow more food here right now." – Rose Matthews, Bear Claw Farm
- Why GoFarm Hawaii?: "We wanted a hands on and well rounded program to teach us the skills to be farmers. We also picked GoFarm because of the business guidance and assistance." – Bobby Skelton & Paulina Michel, Red Beard's Pepper Sauce
- Any life lessons farming has taught you?: "Farming has taught me to be adaptable. With farming, things often don't turn out how I plan so I've had to learn to try new things and change course quickly in order to respond to unforeseen circumstances." – Carey Bonn, Diamond Island Farm
- "The most rewarding part of my job is seeing the kids eating the food they have grown or seeing them return to the garden for our monthly garden days." – Wendy Rosen, Seeds 4 Tomorrow
- "Always had a passion and interest in growing things and also knew how important farming is for our community. Learning how to farm was the next best step." – Derek Taguchi & Nicolas Wong, Beer Lab Hawaii

SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS



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PERFORMANCE

With 5 training sites across 4 islands (O'ahu, Hawai'i, Maui, and Kaua'i), we have trained over **430** 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 **69%** 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, 51 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 2021, the team consulted with over **80** 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 fifth cohort in December 2021.



We conduct agribusiness training statewide. In 2021, we trained over **750** 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. In 2021, **444** individuals participated in the program's introductory phase (AgCurious) and **155** applications were submitted for 106 openings in the program's second phase (AgXposure).