

## Maui New Farmers Network

*Cynthia Nazario-Leary, Director, University of Hawaii Maui College*

### Introducing the Maui New Farmers Network

To meet the need for developing new farmers and to address the barriers to farming in Maui, including 1) lack of education and knowledge; 2) inability to access land and water resources; 3) difficulty marketing products and; 4) limited access to start-up capital, the UH Maui College (UHMC) Agriculture and Natural Resources program has created a New Farmers Network (NFN) that seeks to educate and support the next generation of Maui farmers.

The NFN utilizes the Sustainable Tropical Crop Management degree in the Agriculture and Natural Resources program at UHMC to develop and train students in agricultural and entrepreneurship knowledge and skills. The NFN also offers internships with local, successful farm operations, providing students with valuable hands-on learning experiences and an opportunity for students to apply their agricultural skills in a real world setting.

To support entrepreneurial aspirations of graduates of the program, the NFN seeks to develop networks and partnerships with landowners, markets, and other agencies that can provide program graduates with lease agreements, marketing tools, and sources of funding and exper-

tise. Marketing assistance may include creating or supporting agricultural co-operatives, farmers' markets, value-added product development, and connections to restaurants and stores. Successful NFN graduates can serve as mentors for new students in the program, thereby building a strong network of support for new farmers. This post-graduate support will increase chances of success for new agricultural enterprises and bridge the gap between academic preparation and operating a business in the real world.



*Eddie Rodman (Student/Intern) at Kaihele Farm. They grow a variety of vegetable crops for the local farmers market.*



## Our Program

We implemented a revised curriculum in Sustainable Tropical Crop Management (STCM) this past Spring 2012. The STCM curriculum continues to be revised to meet the needs of students and the NFN. This Fall 2012, UHMC is offering AG 103 Sustainable Agriculture Systems, AG 104 Food Safety and Post Harvest Handling, AG 162 Beekeeping, AG 200 Introduction to Horticulture, and AG 251 Sustainable Crop Production I. Please see the [online class availability](#) for further details. For a complete listing of AG courses offered at UHMC please see the [course catalog online](#).



*Chris Gilbert (Student/Intern) and Greg Stille (Mentor and owner of Piliāni Kope Farm)*

NFN operates within the Agriculture & Natural Resources program at UHMC, hence our training is for enrolled students. We are currently developing criteria for post-graduate support to be provided by the NFN – it will include a minimum GPA, AAS (Associate in Applied Science) degree or CA (Certificate of Achievement), and internship credit. A CA in STCM is 41 credits and an AAS degree in STCM is 62 credits. Length of time for completion of certificates and degrees will vary per student and depend on credits taken per semester but the average is two years for AAS.

Three students in the STCM program recently completed summer agricultural internships. We are continuing to connect and expand our network of potential farm internship sites and mentors. At this time, we have limited funding to provide internship stipends for qualified students in the STCM program.

Courses are offered in Fall and Spring academic semesters at Maui and Moloka'i campuses. Internships are available year-round and are encouraged during the summer. The Maui facility includes a 10,700 sq. ft. greenhouse and 1.5 acre vegetable field. The Moloka'i Farm includes a 5,000 sq. ft greenhouse, orchards, and vegetable fields on 28 acres of land.

The Agriculture and Natural Resources program also offers certificates and degrees in Horticulture and Landscape Maintenance and Cultural and Natural Resource Management.

## For More information

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Online class availability:  
<http://www.sis.hawaii.edu/uhdad/avail.classes?i=MAU&t=201310&s=AG>

Online course catalogue: <http://maui.hawaii.edu/?s=student&p=catalog>

FACEBOOK: UH-Maui College Agriculture and Natural Resources Department  
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/UH-Maui-College-Agriculture-and-Natural-Resources-Department/234570036579111>

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*Article content is the sole responsibility of the author. For more information about this article, contact Cynthia Nazario-Leary, email: [cnazario@hawaii.edu](mailto:cnazario@hawaii.edu).*

