

## Featured Farmer: Wooten Family

*Kauai Kunana Dairy, Kilauea, Kauai*

**Area under production:** 1 ½ acre in crops. 13 acres livestock including dairy goats and laying hens

**Years farming in Hawaii:** Since 1979

**Crops:** All crops are Certified Organic by HOFA: Avocado, bananas, papayas, mango, citrus, lychee, soursop, salad crops, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, cucumbers, beans, spinach, green onions, herbs, all cabbage types, broccoli, cauliflower, turnips, radishes, beets, chards, kales, arrugula

**Fertility management practices:** We make 75% of our own fertilizer by composting our goat and chicken manure. Manure management is a big part of our operation. We do inter-planting and crop rotation as well as green manure crops.

**Pest Management:** We time our plantings, interplant with trap crops, plant pest resistant varieties, and use mulch and traps.

**What Sustainability Means to You:** Sustainability means being creative and innovative when challenges occur and using low-impact methods whenever possible.



**How did the next generation successfully integrate into the family farm?** Our children were born and raised on the farm, so it has come as second nature to them in most ways. Our oldest son and his wife are both art school graduates, but they found that there is an art to farming, too, and they are able to use their formal education in the business in such areas as advertising, product creation, labeling, etc.

**How do you price your products?** We set our prices based on quality and demand. Fortunately, we have found a way to be on the upward end of both of these elements. Our best nickel comes from our direct sales to customers. We are constantly and pleasantly surprised when customers will give us \$3.00 for an item when we are only asking \$2.50.

**How do you promote your products?** We have started agricultural tours to the farm and we are a constant

presence at several farmers markets. We do a fair amount of internet trade for our value added goods. We find that third party labeling means a lot and we participate in the Kauai Made and Kauai Grown Programs. In addition, we are HOFA certified and Animal Welfare Approved.

**How do you adapt your production to meet the needs of clients?** This is always challenging because of the variables which are out of our control: weather, breeding cycle of our goats, rise and fall in tourism, menu changes in the restaurants, etc. We find that having a good variety is our best answer so that we have at least something producing at all times.

**Where do you market your products?** We sell to retailers, customer direct, internet sales, and to many restaurants around the island.

**How many growers do you work with?** We co-op with another organic farm for our deliveries to the south side of the island. We pay them in products and money for this service.

**What does the future look like for your farm?** We are super stoked and always looking ahead. Our success is measured in our ability to provide a decent living for ourselves and the two employees who live and work on our farm.

### **HOT TIP** from Kauai Kunana Dairy

Integrating livestock into a sustainable farming system is something that every operation should consider. The benefits of keeping animals as part of a balanced farming system are many, even though they do require a lot of love and attention.



*Mahalo nui loa to Louisa Wooten for this interview.*

### **Websites**

Kauai Kunana Dairy: <http://www.kauaikunandairy.com/>  
 Facebook Page: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Kilauea-HI/Kauai-Kunana-Dairy/255154709408>  
 Kauai Kunana Dairy Blog: <http://kauaikunandairy.blogspot.com/>