

Featured Farmer: Kyle Studer Pa'auilo Forest Farm, Honoka'a, Hawai'i



Area under production: 13 acres in veggies, 4 in fruit

Years farming in Hawai'i: 9 total, 6 full-time

Crops grown: head cabbage, pak choi, beets, green onions, carrots, kale, radish, turnips, and another dozen mixed veggies

Number of employees and/or family members involved: 3-5 employees full and part-time

Production System

Fertility management: We are a certified organic. I spread a lot of compost – both homemade and bought. I also use sunhemp, buckwheat, and sorghum x sudangrass as a mixed cover crop, and occasionally do some gliricidia alley cropping. Additionally, I use some local tankage from Baker Commodities. Actually, fish emulsion 4-1-1 is a major source of nitrogen.



Pest Management: I utilize a diverse set of IPM practices, including scouting, rotation with non-hosts of different families, and lots of flowers like sweet alyssum, dill, marigolds, and zinnias. We do spray select NOP compliant as needed, particularly with brassicas, rotating between BT and spinosad. We avoid pyrethrum because it is too broad spectrum and can potentially harm beneficial insects.

Food Safety: We follow the Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) guidelines and use common sense.

Strategies for controlling costs: I focus on constantly improving efficiency, understanding my Costs of Production (COP), and reinvesting equipment to reduce labor (our highest cost).

Production planning: We maintain a crop rotation and a weekly planting schedule. We also do some seasonal planting; for example winter squash for Thanksgiving and Christmas, corn for the 4th of July, and broccoli in the coolest time of the year.

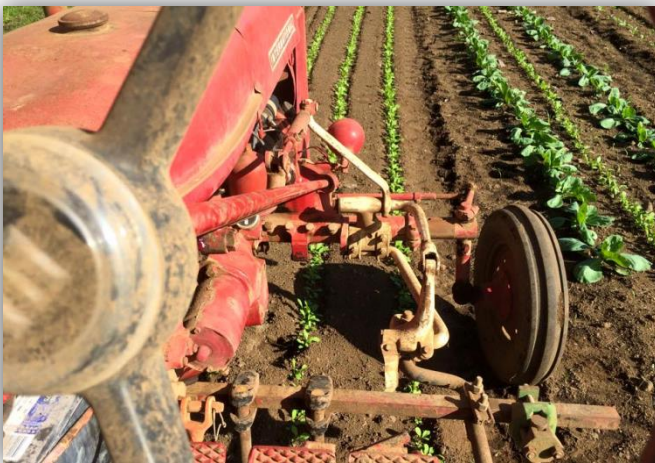


Marketing Strategy

Pricing: Price at market, COP.

Promotion: Word of mouth with high quality produce and service.

Places you sell your products: I sell my produce to all health food stores on Hawai'i island and to Adaptations, which is a local wholesaler. Farmers markets make up less than 25% of my sales.



Could you give us an idea of the future for you operation?

What does sustainability mean to you and how to you plan to ensure Sustainability for your operation?

Economic sustainability is critically important – you have to stay in the black. It's also important to build soil health in order to reduce inputs.

Challenges you expect to face in the next 5-

10 years: I will be moving to 120 acres in Ka'u (70-80 acres will be planted in veggies). A retiring farmer is financing my purchase of his farm, which is allowing for its continuation. We will be increasing our employees to 6-7 initially, and probably to 10-12 once established. Spacing will change, and we want to increase our production of sweet corn, squash, zucchini, and brassicas.

HOT TIPS from Pa'auilo Forest Farm:

- Know your cost of production! Otherwise you might over- or under-charge.
- Be persistent and work hard. Be at the farm, and stay late when you need to.

