

Feature Farmer

Taylor Kellerman

Kualoa Ranch,
Kaneohe, Oahu



Area under production: We manage approximately 1500 acres of pastureland, three diversified agriculture centers ranging between 5 and 10 acres each, and the 125-acre moli'i pond.

Years in production in Hawai'i: Kualoa Ranch was established in 1850. Kualoa Ranch Private Nature Reserve is owned and managed by the eighth-generation descendants of Dr. Gerritt P. Judd. Kualoa has been cattle ranching and farming various crops since the second half of the 19th century. One little known fact is that we are the site of Oahu's first sugar mill. Our operations today really are just the next chapter in an agrarian history that is over 150 years old.

Crops grown, animals raised, and other goods & services:



Aquaculture: Pacific White Shrimp, Tilapia, Pacific oysters
Livestock: Grassfed Grass finished beef, pork, dorper sheep, laying hens. *Orchard Crops:* Banana, Papaya, Breadfruit, Cacao. *Vegetables:* Beets, Carrots, Green onion, leafy greens, eggplant, herbs. *Specialty:* Assorted tropical fruits, olena, dragon fruit, Bromeliads, tropical cut flowers and agritourism.

Number of employees/family members involved: The entire Ranch employs close

to 400 people, and the agriculture sector employs 24.



What is your production system and fertility management? For orchard crops: Quarterly fertilizer application supplemented with mulch, which is made inhouse for enhanced soil health. For Veggies: Bone meal, Sustain®, micronutrient applications at each planting. Both orchard and vegetable crops are typically drip irrigated. We have created three distinct agricultural centers on property that contain the majority of our agriculture excluding cattle and oysters.

Each location has a multidisciplined dedicated staff whose Kuleana it is to make sure

everything within that location is managed properly. Our Ka'a'awa Ag center includes a piggery, orchard crops, sheep pastures, and a 2.5-acre shade house utilized for various crops. Our Moli'i Ag center includes orchard crops, a cut tropical flower farm, and Moli'i gardens (an edible botanical garden). Our Pahalona Ag center includes our shrimp ponds, a 23 terrace LoiKalo, and a 2-acre vegetable farm. Oysters are grown in the 125-acre moli'i pond, and our cattle roam throughout the three valleys of Ka'a'awa, Kualoa, and Hakipu'u grazing over 1500 acres of pasture. Our 24-person agriculture staff are dedicated ag workers supporting the layout of the agricultural centers. We also have a staff of 10 dedicated completely to land and resource management (referred to



internally as land stewardship), and these folks are under the same management umbrella of our ag. This Diversified Agriculture and Land Stewardship team manages the largest footprint of the ranch (95% of the property). Kualoa utilizes various forms of agritourism to help diversify our economy, and we are a self-supported when it comes to the supporting arms of running the business (i.e. mechanics, landscape, trades, janitorial, etc.). These employees coupled with tour operations, special events teams, and food and beverage represent the remaining part of our team.

What are your pest management practices? Scouting dependent. We typically do not have a scheduled pest maintenance program, and we apply various tools on an as needed basis when scouting information shows a

critical buildup of pests and diseases. All product choice decisions hold environmental impact and customer health first.

Food Safety? All products are sold either as a raw commodity, semi processed under the umbrella of our onsite commercial kitchen, or taken to a third party for value-added products (ie Manoa Chocolate). We utilize best management practices in the cultivation of all of our products. Our livestock is harvested using a third-party USDA certified entity, and our value-added products are made under commercial kitchen guidelines (either our own or third party). Our oysters are grown, harvested, and packages



utilizing strict DOH guidelines set



forth making us the only retail certified oyster producer on the island of Oahu.

Strategies to control costs? Choose products that flourish in our farms/ranches growing environments rather than using additional time and resources to grow something less adapted.

Places you sell your products? Direct to customer through our visitor center and website, [Farmlink](#) restaurant, and distributor (oysters).

How do you promote and keep up with market trends? Our social media presence is [@kualoagrown](#) (instagram) and this helps us not only get our branding out there, but helps us connect with other likeminded farmers, ranchers, and customers.

What does the future hold for the ranch? We are in the process of reclaiming more fallow land, as well as investing in infrastructure for increased value-added product offerings.

Any new products/services provided? Our most recent addition to our product line is our heritage breed local pork. This includes individual portions, larger primals, and sausages. It is a great way to close the loop on our agricultural waste generated by the larger operation, and is just one more way to eat/support local.

What advice would you give to other aspiring farmers? Put everything you do through an economically minded filter first. To be successful in Hawaii today one must be as skilled at the business aspect as they are at growing the food they are passionate about. No one farms to get rich, but if you can't support yourself and family any successes will be short lived. Find ways to diversify your income through a multiple pronged economic approach. Agritourism and value-added products are great ways to do this.

Website: <https://www.kualoa.com/>

Facebook: [Kualoa Ranch & Private Nature Reserve](#)

