

## Featured Farmer: Mark Suiso Makaha Mangoes, Mākaha, O'ahu



**Area under production:** 1 acre, plus other cooperative arrangements

**Years farming in Hawai'i:** 25 years

**Crops grown, animals raised, other products/services:** mango, tropical fruit, sheep and goats

**Number of employees and/or family members involved:** No employees, 4 other family members on shares

### Production System

**Fertility management:** It is evolving, from traditional, to mulches and foliar to EM<sup>®</sup> (Effective Microorganisms<sup>®</sup>), occasional soil and tissue analysis.

**Pest Management:** From response with traditional to chickens in the mulch, to EM<sup>®</sup>.

**Food Safety:** eFoodhandlers. I started GAP and SOP with Primuslabs in 2009 was told with dogs on farm they would not certify so I stopped pursuing. I control all deliveries directly.

**Strategies for controlling costs:** Minimal

**Production planning:** This is a continual struggle, tree pruning, water management, site visits at cooperative arrangements.

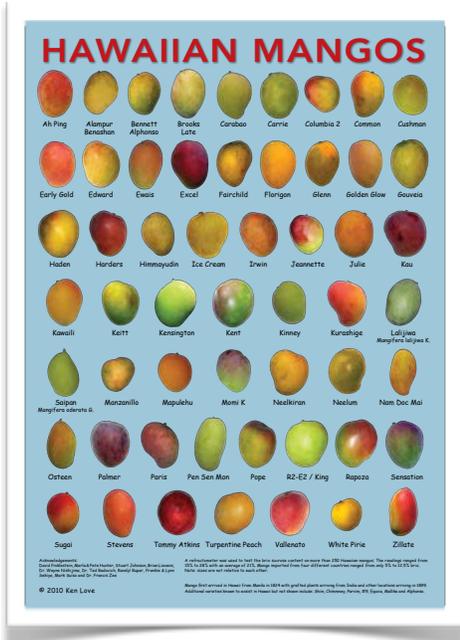
### Marketing Strategy

**Pricing:** This is negotiated at retailer and restaurants for Grade A, and negotiated with bakers and food processors for odd grades.

**Promotion:** Label and brand, Facebook and social media, supporting food events, encouraging others to produce on their property.

**Product characteristics:** Tree-ripened. I assist others grow own fruit on their property.





Hawaiian Mangos poster available from Ken Love, <http://hawaiifruit.net/>

**Places you sell your products:** Roy's, Alan Wong, M&W, Down to Earth, Whole foods, plus I do plant sales and tree management and consulting services directly via our web site and Facebook.

**Approaches to keeping up with market trends:** I am constantly talking with chefs and produce retailers, watching social media.

**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?**

We need more people growing fruit and food on their property, and we need to spotlight their successes, perhaps through celebrations at annual events. If people have success with producing they will continue. If they are unable to resolve real or perceived obstacles it will not continue.

**Explain how the next generation successfully integrated into the farm, how it happened or didn't happen?**

Family is involved in branding with logo merchandise and events like the Mango Festival on July 18 at the Moana Hotel. We entertain at the farm frequently. Makaha Mangoes is linked to all family and friends through social media.

**Challenges you expect to face in the next 5-10 years:** Production continues to be spotty. Powdery mildew control is difficult. Finding capable labor or partners to build up nursery and tree management has been elusive. Other challenges are the cost of water, poor production, pests and diseases means we are continually seeking new crops and better production methods.

**New products or services you are planning:**

We are building up our nursery to get more plants into peoples' property via cooperative efforts with the Hawaii Tropical Fruit Growers, the O'ahu Urban Garden Center, and the O'ahu Master Gardeners. Other plans are to get better at finding the right plant for the right location, perhaps with a smart phone ap; get better at supporting fruit growers and finding a way to sustain the



effort; to develop a better service that makes existing trees more productive at other peoples properties.

### **HOT TIPS** from Makaha Mangoes

- ▶ There's lots of information on YouTube and Google. Sharing information with others helps us all get better.
- ▶ Ultimately it is production that makes the difference.
- ▶ Tree ripened fruit is the best there is. I do not like to let anything leave the farm unless it is ripe. Fruit does not ripen well off of the farm. I use a brix meter to verify the ripeness of the fruit.

