

Featured Farmer: Ann and Owen Kaneshiro Kane Farm, Wai'anae, O'ahu

by Jensen Uyeda

Area under production: 30 acres

Years farming in Hawai'i: 33 years (1980)

Crops grown, products/services: Mānoa lettuce, kai choy, pak choi, daikon, kale, beets, mizuna, radish.

Number of employees and/or family members involved: 17 employees and 2 family members

Production System

Fertility Management: Synthetic fertilizers, cover cropping, composted chicken manure

Pest management: Pesticide rotation to minimize resistance, rapeseed soil fumigants, soil solarization.

Food safety management: We have been including different types of Food Safety Management, for example, checking our reefer boxes making sure that the temperatures are cold enough for produce and having maintenance done on a regular basis. Sanitizing our wash tubs and plastic crates in our warehouse and cleaning the floors at the end of the day. When harvesting in the fields, workers boots and knives are sanitized regularly to keep any contamination from soil to produce at a minimum. Bait traps are laid around perimeter of warehouse to keep rodents away.

Strategies for controlling costs: Owen and some of his farm workers are "Handy Men or Jack of All Trades" and will do most of the repairs and maintenance on the farm. He rarely hires or contracts out a job unless it is a major problem that requires expertise. Also, most of our produce is sold to our customer, nothing is thrown away unless of disease problems. You need to be able to know how much crops to plant, yields per acre, and be able to have a demand for it at the retail level. The produce that we have chosen to grow for our markets are staples that the local people buy regularly.

Production planning: As for production planning, it is pretty much the same crops planted year round, during winter months we plan to plant heavier on certain holiday crops like daikon and mizuna for the New Year's.

What is your marketing strategy?

How do you price your products? Prices are based on market demand and farm supply.



How do you promote your product(s)? Not only by word of mouth but also from consistently growing great quality vegetables. Owen has had many clients looking to buy his produce and has gained a good reputation because of this.

How do you adapt your production to meet the needs of clients? There are times when a request is made by a market to grow a crop that customers are requesting. Owen will usually try to satisfy these needs.

Where do you market your products?

Times Supermarket, Otani Produce, Armstrong Produce, and China Town.

What does the future look like for your farm?

Once I am done, that is it.

How did the next generation successfully integrate into the family farm? Unfortunately, no one will be taking over as the Kaneshiro Children have chosen other career paths.

Challenges you expect to face in the next 5-10 years: With Food Safety becoming law, we all face the challenges of implementing these strict procedures into running our farming business. I hope our customers will understand that the cost of local produce may have to increase in order for farmers to stay in business.



HOT TIP from Kane Farm

The ability to work very hard (7 days a week), but also to strive for perfection if possible. And to never be satisfied, there's always room for improvement! This is what I've learned from Owen.

Mahalo nui loa to Ann and Owen Kaneshiro for this interview. Photos: Jensen Uyeda.