

Featured Farmer: Chauncy Monden

Kula Country Farms, Kula, Maui

Area under production: about 60 acres

Years farming in Hawaii: Farming in the Kula area for four generations since the 1940s

Crops: strawberry, onions, various mixed vegetables including beets, Chinese peas, leafy greens, and pumpkins

Fertility management practices: synthetic fertilizers, integrating incorporating cover crops such sorghum-sudangrass hybrids sudex (*Sorghum bicolor* x *S. bicolor* var. sudanense) and mustards with other strategies to build organic matter.

Pest Management: pesticide rotation, crop rotation, disease resistant varieties, low impact pesticides such as neem oil.

What Sustainability Means to You: Sustainability means local food production. Hawaii's ability to feed itself is critical. We focus on Maui. Everything that can be done to support local production is important. We must educate the public, elementary school kids particularly, and we do this on Maui by bringing kids to visit our farm. We must improve access to land, labor and water. Where possible, we must increase the scale of operations, improving economies of scale, although even small guys can work together to make it feasible.



How did the next generation successfully integrate into the family farm? There is no guaranteed formula. I've been farming for 12 years and my family discouraged me from going into farming. It's always going to be a challenge, but ultimately people have to eat. So long as my kids can make a living at farming, I'll encourage them to farm. I am very concerned with encroachment by development onto farmland. The land that we're farming isn't the same land my family farmed forty years ago. To make a living we farmers need to have access to land.

Where do you market your products? We sell the majority, around 70-80% on Maui, which is our goal. A large proportion of our produce is

direct marketed to retailers such as Safeway, Whole Foods, Times, Costco, Mana Foods, Pukalani Superette, etc. We also sell to wholesalers. We have a roadside stand with seasonal and value added products. We hold seasonal events, like pumpkins in the fall, or a Valentine's Day event last month featuring chocolate covered strawberries.

At our farm stand, we have strawberries, onions, papaya, banana, and various vegetables available for sale year round. If we don't have any from our farm, we'll buy from other growers and sell them at our farm stand. But we exclusively sell produce and products from Maui County.

We have several value added products with our own brand: strawberries and onions, Kula Country syrup, jam, and BBQ sauce. We contract out the production of our value added items. We also sell value added products from other growers, like pepper sauce, all locally produced on Maui.



HOT TIP from KULA COUNTRY FARMS:

- Don't count on "spreadsheet farming." You need to plan ahead but you also need to be flexible and be able to adjust for all the variables that farming brings.
- Don't borrow money.
- Work hard and don't give up.

Mahalo nui loa to Chauncy Monden for this interview.

Kula Country Farms Websites:

<http://www.kulacountry.com/>

http://site.kulacountryfarm.com/Home_Page.html

[Kula Country Farms on Facebook](#)

[Hawaiian Grown TV - Kula Country Strawberries - Kula Country Farms](#)

[Hawaiian Grown TV - Maui Onions - Kula Country Farms](#)