



Yokoyama Farm- Allan and Cora Yokoyama

Interview by Kylie Taveres

How long have you been farming? How large (area) is your production operation?

We are a small farm. We currently have 3.5 acres in production. We had been farming on Kauai for 7 years before moving to the Big Island.

How many years has your current operation been in production?

We have been farming in Waimea for 10 years.

Crops do you grow, animals do you raise and other goods and services you provide?

Artichokes, beets, blueberries, broccolini, cabbage, cauliflower, daikon, potatoes, sweet onions, and taro leaf.

How many employees and/or family members are involved in your operation?

Besides myself, my wife Cora and our dog, Tobie.

What is your production system (for example, organic, hydroponic) and fertility management practices?

Direct seed plantings for beets, daikon, and taro. All else are started with organic seeds in 72 cell trays. Depending on the variety, we follow a 10-14 day planting schedule.

We pre-plant with Nutri-Rich chicken manure pellets, Neem pellets, and phosphorus. EM1 and nitrogen are injected every 10 days.

What are your pest management practices?

IPM Program:

Set threshold, monitor and identify pests, prevention and control. We use organic methods and products such as beneficial insects, biological control, companion planting, cover cropping, mulching, and no-till. Use of some non-organic products are also used, we do annual soil sampling for pH, nutrient levels, and nematode population. This helps manage the soil and keep levels in balance for the crops we grow. CTAHR and NRCS provide valuable knowledge and suggestions based on our soil and tissue sample results.

What is your process in complying with Food Safety regulations?

Rinsing, drying and packing produce for the farmers market and restaurants.

Clean and sanitize sinks, tools and crates, and air dry before and after use.

Recording all processes and records available for inspection.

What are your strategies for controlling costs?

Comparing prices and buying in bulk, resulting in discounts.

Where do you sell your products?

Honopua Market on Saturdays, as well as 4 restaurants.

How do you promote and keep up with market trends?

Reading seed catalogs, food magazines for new seed varieties and food trends. We like to introduce new produce to our markets—it keeps it interesting and fun for both ourselves and for our customers.

What does the future hold for your farm?

Continue to keep doing as we have been these past years.

Do you plan to expand your products and/or services provided?

As it is just Cora and myself doing what we do to make the farm work, we offer 1 or 2 new vegetable varieties twice a year to keep it interesting.

What advice would you give to other aspiring farmers?

Never give up! There will be hard times as well as good ones, your produce will reflect your hard work and be your reward. Do your homework, make decisions based on fact and research. Keep pushing yourself, don't be lazy or complacent. Your plants will be happy and the people who buy your produce will be happy, too!

