

FAQ: Changes at UH CTAHR ADSC

Is the ADSC closing?

No, the Agricultural Diagnostic Service Center is not closing. The ADSC, a unit of the University of Hawai'i, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, that was created in 1984 to run its seed program and perform analytic and diagnostic services, will continue to provide the public with Seed Laboratory services and Plant Disease diagnostics.

The Soil and Plant Analysis portion of the ADSC, however, will be converted from a public lab into a faculty-run, multi-user lab focused on bringing the latest science and technology to growers and land managers in Hawai'i.

What will happen to Soil and Plant Analysis?

CTAHR is closing its public Soil and Plant Analysis Lab and converting the present lab space into a new, cutting-edge Soil Health, Environment, and Ecosystem Resilience [S(HEE)R] Research Laboratory that will support research and training for the next generation. During and after this transition to a new lab, CTAHR will provide guidance to the public on alternative labs where clients can send soil and plant samples for analysis. Also, CTAHR faculty will continue to assist local farmers and individuals in interpreting the results from these labs and providing science-based recommendations.

Why is Soil and Plant Analysis ending?

Since the ADSC was created almost 40 years ago, our testing program has not linked adequately to ongoing research opportunities or the application of the latest science and technologies. More recently, our faculty leaders in soil health, environment, and ecosystem resilience have created new, exceptional opportunities to develop innovative knowledge that will better support local growers and Hawai'i's overall agricultural effectiveness. Transitioning this lab space is necessary in order to facilitate these opportunities, now and in the future.



How is CTAHR moving forward?

CTAHR advocates a science-based, data-driven approach, and is committed to being at the forefront of research and innovation toward developing more sustainable, efficient, and resilient food systems, while minimizing any negative impacts on the environment and society.

To fulfill this, CTAHR will transition the space in Donald Sherman Laboratory into modern, cutting-edge laboratories where faculty, students, and staff can engage in strategic and impactful research. This change to the S(HEE)R Lab (e.g., active research in climate-smart commodities, soil health, carbon sequestration, and climate change adaptation in natural and working lands) is not just a physical or procedural change, but a paradigm shift toward a more comprehensive and evolving understanding of soil as a living system.

We are confident the S(HEE)R Laboratory will result in new opportunities to improve scientific information and lead to better, evidence-based recommendations for local growers. In time, the scientific knowledge gained will also allow CTAHR's Extension faculty to provide the latest science-based analysis and recommendations, which will benefit local farmers across the state and Pacific Basin.

Where can I get my Soil tested?

While UH CTAHR cannot recommend specific products or services and does not guarantee these services, there are common labs that customers and faculty have relied on and partnered with, in the past and currently. These include:

- Crop Nutrient Solutions, HI (www.cropnutrientsolutions.com)
- Laboratories on the U.S. Mainland (naptprogram.org/about/participants/all) that participate in the North American Proficiency Testing (NAPT) Program (www.naptprogram.org).

- Another useful source of general information on certified labs is the Agricultural Laboratory Testing Association (ALTA) (alta.ag/certified-labs)
- Please note, if you live on:
 - o **O'ahu:** Crop Nutrient Solutions has permits to accept your soil test.
 - o **Maui:** Crop Nutrient Solutions has permits to accept your soil test.
 - o **Kaua'i:** Crop Nutrient Solutions has permits to accept your soil test.
 - o **Moloka'i:** Please contact a NAPT lab to confirm it has permits to accept your soil test.
 - o **Hawai'i Island:** Hawai'i County does not allow soil to be sent to another Hawai'i island. Please contact a NAPT lab directly.
- Once you receive test results, please contact your Extension agent, who can assist in interpreting those results and providing science-based recommendations.

Where can I get my Plant Disease and Insect diagnostics?

CTAHR's laboratory in Hilo, which supports plant pathology services and, to a lesser extent, insect diagnostics, will continue. We are in the process of assessing how we can serve the state's industries (agriculture, landscape, public, natural resources, etc.) in these efforts. These developments will be identified and shared with the public.

Where can I get my Forage tested?

While UH CTAHR cannot recommend specific products or services and does not guarantee these services, there are common labs that customers and faculty have relied on and partnered with, in the past and currently. This includes: Dairy One, NY (dairyone.com)

Is the Seed Lab program closing?

No, the Seed Lab is not closing. CTAHR is committed to ensuring we can support the Hawai'i agricultural community in accessing locally derived, improved varieties of agricultural crops to support food production in the state. The Seed Lab program is viewed as essential to this effort.

Does the Seed Lab have enough seeds?

Currently, inventories are low, due to a spike in demand for seeds by the public during the global COVID pandemic, as well as recent staff retirements that reflect national trends post pandemic. Despite budget constraints, we are working to increase ADSC staff, including Seed Lab leadership, and partner with local growers in order to replenish our seed supplies up to pre-Covid levels and increase overall capacity.

The Bottom Line

This is a developing situation, and as other details are finalized, we will be happy to share them with all stakeholders. We continue to revisit and invest in components of the ADSC that will best serve Hawai'i's commercial and home food/agricultural producers.

Right now, CTAHR can say with confidence that this transition will ultimately result in long-term benefits for the people and businesses of Hawai'i, including research advancements, scientific progress, and service improvements that will positively impact the state.

Questions may be directed to:

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