

Feature Farmer

2K Farm, LLC
Katsuhiro Kobashigawa
Waianae, HI – Oahu

By: Joshua Silva – Oahu Edible Crops Agent

How long have you been farming? Area currently under production?

Grew up farming with my father but have been farming on my own since 1983. Currently farming 7 acres.

How many years has your current operation been in production?

Producing green onions since 1991

Crops grown, animals raised, other goods & services?

Green onions

Number of employees and/or family members involved in the operation?

4 workers plus myself and my partner. So 6 people total.

What is your production system and fertility management?

Our production system is primarily conventional, but we have cut back significantly over the years. The biggest change has been in fertilizer use. We used to add 1 ton a month (40 bags) of 20-20-20 via granule backpack sprayer. But after working with Extension and doing occasional soil tests, I now fertigate urea (46-0-0) with a boom sprayer, about 8 bags a month, and still have good production. I am also experimenting with compost and cover crops like cowpea to



see how that can help build my soil health and reduce my fertilizer inputs even more.

Pest Management Practices?

To manage pests and diseases, we try to use different practices to prevent or eliminate them from the field. I try to scout the fields everyday for problems. From far away I can see differences in shades or plant height that lets me know something is wrong. When I used to direct seed a long time ago, ants the field. So now I transplant my green care of the ant problem and makes it pests and diseases.

I used to spray pesticide every week, I use a pesticide rotation schedule that cutback. I might spray about 2-3 times a “softer” pesticides that work well and resistance. Overhead irrigation is to disrupt my thrip problem specifically. my workers to pray for me at church :)



would eat up seeds in onions, which takes easier to care for other

but for the past 5 years has helped greatly to month and incorporate haven't seen any another great tool I use And just in case, I ask

What is your process in complying Regulations?

We believe in farm food safety and have certified and doing food safety practices regulations. I saw how some buyers with care and cleanliness, and I wanted to incorporate that into our system. It begins with my routine at 4am; I clean and sanitize all the bins, tables, surfaces, and floors everyday. My partner also logs the refrigerator temperature and cleans the bathroom everyday, and oversees our worker food safety training every 3 months. She is also on



with Food Safety

been USDA GAP audit since 2000 before any were treating crops

top of reminding workers during the day when they forget some practices. We switched over to plastic bins because buyers would throw away our single-use boxes, and cleanable/sanitizable. We also wash our green onions via single-pass wash to make it cleaner on our end

and the buyers' end.

What are your strategies for controlling costs?

Our main cost is labor. There are no strategies to control fixed worker costs like medical comp. So we address labor efficiency by using different techniques, technology, and chemicals to try to innovate. Drop seeders for our transplants have saved a huge amount of time compared to how we first started planting in the 90's, dropping seeds one-by-one :) I spray herbicides to



make harvesting easier or else the weeds tangle up with the green onions. We also just started planting a new green onion variety a couple years ago that produces heavier plants, but the root breaks off easily for harvesting. This cut our harvesting times by 2-3x. As much as possible we try to use machines and mechanization but wish there were more machines available in Hawaii for our smaller field sizes.

Places you sell your products?

Honolulu Poi Company and Manson Products.

How do you promote and keep up with market trends?

I don't really promote. The buyers I've worked with trust our system and practices, like the high standards we have for cleanliness and food safety. But to meet my operation costs, I increase my price steadily so in 5 years my price is where I want it to be. For example, I'm not going to raise my price \$0.25 one-time, but instead I increase it \$0.05 a year. Or else shock the buyer.



What does the future hold for your farm?

Try to be steady. I'm 66 years old now, so maybe got another 10-15 years. I'm going to farm as long as I can. What else am I going to do lol :)

New products/services provided?

Trying to experiment with some hydroponic vegetables when I have time.

What advice would you give to other aspiring farmers?

Be open minded and understand farming is gonna be a hard lifestyle.

Be realistic. Need to make a living from farming; if cannot, then why farm. You need to grow the same thing consistently and good quality over and over.

Keep up with the economy and inflation.

You got to WANT to farm.

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