



HAWAII AGRICULTURAL FOUNDATION

2023-2024 ANNUAL REVIEW



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Letter From The Executive Director



As we look back on the past year, I am immensely proud of the significant progress made by the Hawai'i Agricultural Foundation in driving innovation and growth across our agricultural programs. We have also strengthened the crucial connections between these programs and career opportunities within the industry.

The 2023-24 school year was an exciting one, marked by a few firsts. As our Young Entrepreneurs Program (YEP) continued to grow, it expanded to reach students in schools across all islands. YEP empowers middle and high school students with hands-on business skills and real-world experience by guiding them in creating and bringing to market innovative and dynamic agri-business ventures that inspire and excite.

Additionally, we expanded our EAT THINK DRINK (ETD) series by launching ETD Tours, offering attendees hands-on experiences with local agricultural and agribusiness operations that deepen their understanding of topics discussed during the events.

A resilient and sustainable agricultural industry is vital to ensuring food security in Hawai'i. Addressing the needs of our farmers and connecting them with the community are at the core of our mission. These accomplishments are a testament to our ongoing commitment to supporting farmers and fostering engagement between them and the broader community.

None of this would have been possible without the dedication of our incredible team, the generosity of our donors, and the invaluable support of our community members who participate in and advocate for our programs. We are also deeply grateful to the teachers who remain committed to education and to our invaluable partners for making our work possible. Together, we continue to strengthen Hawai'i's agricultural community and build a more sustainable future.

Mahalo for your unwavering support and shared vision. Together, we can achieve a brighter, more resilient future for our islands.

Mahalo nui loa!



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Denise Yamaguchi".

Denise Yamaguchi
FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
HAWAII AGRICULTURAL FOUNDATION



About HAF

The Hawai‘i Agricultural Foundation is a non-profit organization created to promote agriculture and farming. Established in 2007, its mission is to support and sustain Hawai‘i’s agricultural industry by addressing critical needs and services of farmers and the agricultural industry in Hawai‘i, and by better connecting the farmers with the community and vice-versa. This involves educational and outreach programs in the community, as well as direct marketing, technical, educational, and in-the field support for farmers.

Vision

We envision a Hawai‘i where agriculture is celebrated, supported, and embraced by the community, resulting in a resilient and vibrant food system that supports our local farmers, ranchers, and fishermen.



HAWAI‘I AGRICULTURAL FOUNDATION

Board of Directors

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Denise Yamaguchi, Founder and Executive Director

Liz Stanton-Barrera, Director of Grants and Education

Jennie Kaahui, Young Entrepreneurs Program and Ag Tech Manager

Sarah Griffiths, Operations, Executive Support and Events Manager

Kai Jacobs, Education Coordinator



HAWAII AGRICULTURAL FOUNDATION

Growing Minds, Growing Hawai‘i: Education Programs That Inspire Tomorrow’s Leaders

Throughout the school year, students and teachers across Hawai‘i immerse themselves in Hawai‘i Agricultural Foundation’s dynamic education programs, where science, technology, and business innovation intersect to shape the agricultural leaders of tomorrow. These programs offer teachers free professional development, hands-on curricula, and materials that transform classrooms into vibrant centers of discovery. By sparking curiosity and creativity, teachers inspire students to explore the exciting and impactful career opportunities available in agriculture, helping to build a brighter future for our islands.



6,400+
STUDENTS SERVED

Students across the state gained valuable insights into agriculture, sustainability, and business innovation. Through hands-on learning, we're empowering the next generation to become leaders in shaping Hawai'i's agricultural future.



202
PARTICIPATING
TEACHERS

Our programs thrive thanks to the dedication of teachers who led our curricula this past year. As front-line leaders, they open students' eyes to the vast opportunities in agriculture. We are deeply grateful for their role in shaping Hawai'i's agricultural future.



115
PUBLIC & CHARTER
SCHOOLS

We expanded our programs to more schools across the state, amplifying our mission and impact throughout Hawai'i!



9
EDUCATOR WORKSHOPS

We hosted teacher workshops to equip educators with the tools and training needed to bring our programs to life. These sessions empowered teachers to engage students in agriculture, science, and technology, ensuring impactful, real-world learning across the state.



HAWAII AGRICULTURAL FOUNDATION

1,469

STUDENTS

62

TEACHERS

35

SCHOOLS

Where Would We Be Without Seeds introduces K-3 students to agricultural careers by integrating STEM with hands-on learning. From seeds to plant cycles, students explore the exciting possibilities in agriculture and its potential as a rewarding career path.



1,996

STUDENTS

67

TEACHERS

37

SCHOOLS

Veggie U Hawai'i, developed by Chef's Garden in Ohio and aligned with Hawai'i State DOE standards, offers an exciting curriculum for grades 3-5 that blends science, health, language arts, and math. Free garden kits with grow lights and root view boxes allow students to experience hands-on learning from seed to harvest, sparking a passion for agriculture.

HAWAII AGRICULTURAL FOUNDATION



250+

ART ENTRIES

50+

RECIPE SUBMISSIONS

This year's Localicious® Art & Recipe Contest gave students across Hawai'i the chance to get creative and influence their school lunch menus. Supported by Hawai'i Gas and in partnership with the Hawai'i Department of Education, the contest challenged students to design healthy meals using local ingredients, inspiring culinary creativity and raising awareness about local agriculture. It also opened doors for students interested in culinary arts, offering hands-on experience and a potential pathway to future careers in cooking.

IN THE FIELDS

HAWAII AGRICULTURAL FOUNDATION

2,335
STUDENTS

Through collaboration with the Department of Education’s Career Technical Education office and local farms, students dive into hands-on learning with mentorships in traditional, organic, and emerging tech agriculture. In the Fields promotes place-based education, linking educators with ag focused businesses to align curricula with industry needs.

27
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
CLASSROOMS

In the Fields Internship

This past summer, HAF and the Hawai‘i Agriculture Research Center (HARC) joined forces to offer high school students and recent graduates a unique internship opportunity to dive into Hawai‘i’s agriculture industry. Through a 7-week paid program, participants got their hands dirty—literally!—while gaining invaluable experience in both laboratory settings and hands-on agricultural roles. Interns worked side-by-side with industry professionals, learning cutting-edge techniques and exploring the future of sustainable agriculture in Hawai‘i. It’s a fun, immersive experience that allows students to sharpen their skills and contribute to the island’s agricultural innovation.

29
MIDDLE AND HIGH
SCHOOL CLASSROOMS

603
STUDENTS



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23
TEACHERS

Middle and high school students embark on a hands-on journey to create local value-added agricultural products and operate a small business. YEP intends to inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs—developing students’ creativity, business acumen, and understanding of the vital role agriculture plays in building a resilient and sustainable future.

16
SCHOOLS

Students navigate every aspect from conception and budgeting to production, marketing, and sales. With start-up capital, YEP businesses generate profits that go back to teams’ schools.

17
SMALL BUSINESSES
ESTABLISHED

YEP Bootcamp: Empowering Future Entrepreneurs

HAF hosted its very first YEP Bootcamp. Held at the Wahiawā Value-Added Product Development Center, this exciting event served as the official kick-off for the 2024-2025 YEP program.

32
AGRI-VALUE PRODUCTS
BROUGHT TO MARKET

It was designed to equip teachers with the tools, knowledge, and resources needed to guide students through the program. Throughout the year, HAF will support teachers by providing access to industry professionals who will share insights on small business development, agri-business, product creation, packaging, marketing, and sales. These experts help connect students to real-world skills that promote entrepreneurship and encourage careers in agriculture and related fields.

\$17K+
GROSS REVENUE



HAWAII AGRICULTURAL FOUNDATION

Bridging Farmers and Community: Growing Connections

We're passionate about showcasing the vital role local agriculture plays in Hawai'i's food security and economy. Our mission goes beyond just spreading the word—we're bringing the community and industry leaders together to spark lively, thought-provoking discussions that drive real change.

By connecting farmers with the community, providing access to land and essential resources, and empowering local businesses to thrive, we're strengthening the future of Hawai'i's agricultural industry. **With your support, we're growing awareness, fostering collaboration, and building a sustainable foundation for generations to come.**



18

FARMERS

196+

LEASED ACRES

HAF Ag Park at Kunia

Established in 2011 through a collaboration between the Hawai‘i Agricultural Foundation, Bayer, and Island Palm Communities, the HAF Ag Park at Kunia continues to thrive as a hub for empowering small local farmers. Located within the fertile Kunia corridor, the park offers ideal growing conditions with consistent sunlight and warm temperatures, allowing farmers to cultivate a wide variety of crops year-round. With access to essential infrastructure and innovative technical support, farmers at Kunia are not only growing crops—they’re building self-sufficiency, expanding their businesses, and reaching markets statewide. From vibrant fruits and vegetables to iconic pineapples, the diversity in the fields reflects the strength and resilience of local agriculture.



HAWAII AGRICULTURAL FOUNDATION



Since its 2022 launch, the Localicious® Heroes series has shared nearly 40 inspiring stories of Hawai‘i’s farmers and agricultural innovators. In collaboration with Searider Productions at Wai‘anae High School, students have produced engaging videos that highlight the dedication of local food producers. This year, we released three new videos focused on specialty crops, showcasing local farmers and chefs cultivating Hawai‘i’s unique produce. The series continues to strengthen our community’s connection to agriculture and emphasizes the vital role of local farmers in building a sustainable economy.

Funding for this year’s Localicious® Heroes was made possible by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service through the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) FY21 COVID, grant 21SCBPHI1064-00. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the USDA.



EAT THINK DRINK is a premier event series created by the Hawai'i Agricultural Foundation. It brings together leaders in global and local agriculture to discuss sustainability, innovation, and economic growth. This quarterly series engages diverse audiences and consumers to explore the food we eat and the people who produce it. By highlighting food and agricultural issues facing our community, **EAT THINK DRINK** empowers the next generation of leaders to get involved in policy and advocacy to drive change. Past events can be found at www.hawaiiagfoundation.org.

New this year, the **EAT THINK DRINK Tours**, supported by Ulupono Initiative, offered exclusive behind-the-scenes tours of local farms, ranches, and food producers. Attendees got a firsthand look at Hawai'i's sustainable agriculture in action, connecting with the innovators shaping the future of local food systems.

February 20, 2024 | Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Ho'okupu Center

The AgriValue Movement – Growing Ag Success

Fueling local ag demand, scaling exports, and cultivating economic stability.

- Keynote Speaker:** Grant Verry, Chief Executive of THE FOODBOWL
Moderator: Poni Askew, Co-founder, Hawaiian Vinegar Company
Panelists: Matt Hong, Co-founder, Banán; Kūhiō Lewis, CEO, Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement; Carlos G. Peñaloza, Ph.D, Chancellor, Leeward Community College
Chefs: Colin Hazama, Chef/Owner - C4 Table, Executive Chef - Hawai'i Food & Wine Festival; Jason Peel, Proprietor & Executive Chef, Nami Kaze; Sean Priester, Ho'okupu Center; Reid Matsumura, Executive Chef, Straits Restaurant & Lounge



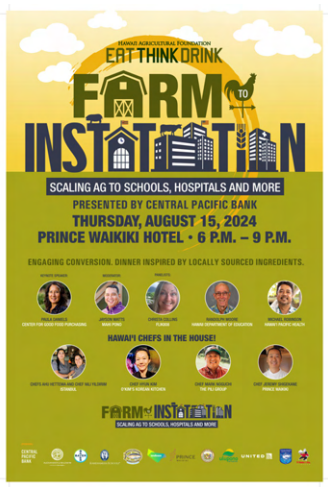
June 26, 2024 | Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Ho'okupu Center

Beefing Up Hawai'i: Grazing Toward Increased Production

How Hawai'i's beef industry shapes economies, communities, and food security, and discover innovations for sustainable growth.

- Keynote speaker:** Kyle Caires, Ph.D., Associate Extension Agent, Department of Human Nutrition, Food & Animal Sciences, University of Hawai'i – CTAHR
Moderator: Taylor Kellerman, Director of Diversified Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Kualoa Ranch Hawai'i
Panelists: Nicole Galese, Executive Director, Hawaii Cattleman's Council; Ryan Torres, Global Category Manager Protein, Y. Hata & Co., Ltd.; James "Jay" Nobriga, Nobriga Ranch, Vice President - Maui Soda & Ice Works Ltd.; Timothy Luton, General Manager, Maui Cattle Company
Chefs: Ronnie Nasuti, Tiki's Grill & Bar; Sean Priester, Ho'okupu Center; Wade Ueoka, MW Restaurant; Matt Young, Duke's Waikiki





August 15, 2024 | Prince Waikiki

Farm to Institution: Scaling Ag to Schools, Hospitals, and More

Sourcing and integrating local agricultural products into large institutional supply chains.

Keynote Speaker: Paula Daniels, Center for Good Food Purchasing
Moderator: Jayson Watts, Director of External Affairs and Strategic Initiatives, Mahi Pono

Panelists: Randolph Moore, Deputy Superintendent, Hawaii Department of Education; Christa Collins, District Manager, Flik808; Michael Robinson, Vice President – Government & Community Affairs, Hawai‘I Pacific Health

Chefs: Ahu Hetteema and Nili Yildirim, Istanbul Hawaii; Hyun Kim, O’Kim’s Korean Kitchen; Mark Noguchi, The Pili Group; Jeremy Shigekane, Prince Waikiki



October 29, 2024 | Prince Waikiki

Regional Kitchens: Transforming Ag Through Strategic Investments

A dynamic conversation with community and industry leaders on how regional kitchens can support food security and local ag growth.

Keynote Speaker: State Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, State of Hawai‘i.
Moderator: First Lady Jaime Kanani Green, State of Hawai‘i
Panelists: Keith Hayashi, Superintendent of Hawai‘i Public Schools System; Candace Kaanaana, General Manager of FCH Enterprises (Zippy’s Restaurants); Hawai‘i State Representative Kirstin Kahaloa; David Wong, Owner of Mountain View Farms

Chefs: Chef Robin Abad, Ali‘i Fish Market; Chef Keaka Lee, Kapa Hale; Chef Jeremy Shigekane, Prince Waikiki; Sous Chef Mackenzie McCue, Artizen

Partners in Innovation: Funders and Sponsors

Mahalo to the foundations and companies whose generous support makes our work possible. Their commitment to Hawai'i's agricultural future enables us to deliver impactful programs that educate, inspire, and connect communities across the islands. Together, we are cultivating a more sustainable and resilient future for Hawai'i.

EDUCATION GRANTS

2023 Congressionally Funded Community Program

Alumbra Innovations Foundation

American Savings Bank

Annie Sinclair Knudsen Memorial Fund

of the Hawai'i Community Foundation

Atherton Family Foundation

City & County of Honolulu

County of Maui, Office of Economic Development

G.N. Wilcox Trust

GuavaGar Westfall Charitable Fund

of the Hawai'i Community Foundation

First Hawaiian Bank Foundation

Hawai'i Department of Agriculture

Hawai'i Food & Wine Festival

Hawaiian Electric

John M. Ross Foundation

Ka Papa o Kākuhihewa Fund

of the Hawai'i Community Foundation

Kahuku Community Fund

of the Hawai'i Community Foundation

McInerny Foundation

Pacific Literacy Consortium

State of Hawai'i

The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation

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