

FY 2014

Hawaii Agricultural Research Center

\$32,166 to the Hawaii Agriculture Research Center, Kunia, HI, to create a new farmers' market at an agribusiness complex and farmer housing site.

Final Report

Farmers Market Promotion Program
Final Performance Report

Date: Novemeber 1, 2014 through October 31, 2015
Contact: Dave Kula, dkula@harc-hspa.com, 808-621-1351
Recipient Name: Hawaii Agriculture Research Center (HARC)
Project Title: Kunia Village Farmers Market
Grant Number: 14-FMPPX-HI-0053
Project Location: Kunia, Hawaii (Island of Oahu)
Year of Grant Award: 2014
Amount Awarded: \$32,166.00

Program Summary

Hawaii Agriculture Research Center established a commuters farmers' market in Kunia Village (KV) on the main corridor between Central Oahu's residential areas and the US Army Schofield Barracks. This farmers' market is more like a produce market than the traditional farmers' market where several vendors and other activities take place. It provides an opportunity for primarily but not exclusively, non-English speaking new farmers to have a direct sales market close to their farms. Sales of fresh produce, processed products and limited prepared foods are provided every Friday from 3 to 6 pm to the local residents of Kunia Village and the employees and soldiers from Schofield.

Goals and Objectives

1. *Raise awareness and educate local consumers about local produce to increase demand:* Flyers were distributed to the KV residents and to the Schofield Barracks/Wheeler Air Field and banners were placed along the road alerting the drivers about the market (when/where). A website was developed showing the produce available and ability to order online and drive-thru pickup. Stickers were handed out to customers with day/time and website address for online ordering. Also, people were/are present during market hours explaining the ethnic produce on sale. Initially the market averaged 200 customers and sales of \$1,450: that leveled off since late spring to around 90 customers and about \$700 in sales. See "Lessons Learned" regarding the online ordering results.
2. *Provide alternate market access to local farmers and processed vendors and lessen dependency on wholesalers and distant urban markets:* Prior to opening the market the only other open-area markets available were several miles away; fees were charged for space; and liability insurance was required, and therefore, the farmers did not participate. The KV market location allows the farmers direct access to area residents and commuters and essentially eliminates their expenses.
3. *Showcase the available fresh and nutritious food items to consumers:* In particular, ethnic produce, such as bak choy, won bok, bittermelon, japanese cucumber, and locally grown asparagus, potatoes and onions. Individuals are onsite to educate customers about the vegetables and answers question regarding food preparation. Sales of these items have been slowly increasing.
4. *support community-based economic development , reduce travel time for farmers and*

customers: HARC has partnered with the Pacific Gateway Foundation (PGF) to provide space and a facility for their immigrant farmers, whose farms are all within 2 miles of the market place, to sell their produce and learn how to conduct a business operation. The teen-aged family members have become active participants and have been trained in operating the cash register, credit card machine, and reconciling sales to inventory. The Thai farmers organized into an association and have taken operational responsibility of the market.

Accomplishments:

The Kunia Farmers' Market provided an opportunity for immigrant farmers to participate in a farmers' market. All are minority family farms established within the past 24 months. Access to healthy farm fresh food is provided to employed and retired agricultural workers living in the Kunia Village which does not have public transportation and which is over 5 miles from stores in a hilly area. Access to healthy fresh as well as processed and prepared food is also provided to commuters on a Friday afternoon at a convenient spot on their way home for each weekend.

The Farmers' Market has occurred every Friday from 3pm to 6pm since February 6, 2015 (regardless of weather conditions) and will continue on under the Thai Farmers Association.

- It is well established with the Kunia Village residents and the Kunia corridor commuters as a reliable direct sale market for produce and processed food items from the surrounding farms.
- It represents a new source for fresh, local products in the area and provides an average increase in income to the Thai farmers of about \$150 per week.
- It has resulted in the formation of the Thai Association to coordinate their efforts for the KV market, and perhaps other enterprises.
- Introduced teenaged family members to the business and sales side of agriculture.

Well before applying for this grant HARC assisted the Pacific Gateway Foundation (PGF) by working with the Hawaii Agricultural Foundation (HAF) to lease land, in the immediate area, to PGF's immigrants. HARC then partnered with PGF to plan, organize and establish the farmers market. HARC provided land and built the permanent structure for the market and PGF worked with the Thai farmers to identify the produce, quantities and pricing based on initial KV resident surveys. Both PGF and HAF continue their efforts to assist the Thai farmers and PGF, along with the Thai Farmers Association, have now assumed responsibility for continuing the Kunia Village Farmers Market.

Activities

- Market Coordinator and Translator identified;
- Creation of Farmers' Market Committee which met to organize the site and prepare farmers for the market;
- Creation of website (www.kuniafarmersmarket.org); set up with Paypal for opportunity to shop on line and pick up at a drive-thru;
- Organize site preparation: HARC's staff donated their time/materials to build a structure

- to accommodate and provide permanent shelter for the market produce display;
- Install Kunia Farmers' Market banner (structure was created to hold this very large banner) and flags (several on bamboo poles circling site and 3 large flag banners on street);
- Attracted average of 100 customers per hour and \$1,500 in sales during first 4 months, but average has dropped to about 2/3rds that number and \$850 in sales;
- Market opened with 11 regular vendors and now there are 5 regular vendors (farmers) and 2 vendors that provide product periodically.
- Assisted 6 farmer families to organize needs and delivery of produce among farmers wishing to provide produce;
- establish Kunia Farmers' Association; create inventory forms and payment system; take on responsibility of setting up tables, flags and signage;
- Coordinate market every Friday: 43 Fridays through November and continuing;
- Hire traffic police officer until market established to alert drivers of cars slowing and turning into market;
- Added organic eggs, processed products from certified kitchen, taro and banana chips, and added prepared foods from certified kitchen and delivered to market: spring rolls, curry and pho;
- Added cut flowers at special holidays;
- Advertising targeted to specialized niche commuters' market (federal & military personnel and local area residents): listed on island website for Farmers' Markets
- Develop flyers (attached) and distribute to apartment complexes in area; to businesses in area; to all tenants in village; to military rental agency for military housing distribution; posted in these businesses bulletin boards and at the post office located on site in Kunia Village Emailed to military rental agency periodically to post in its office and to distribute to military tenants also to businesses in village;
- Weekly A-frames are put up along the corridor, Kunia Road, in both directions on Thursday reminding commuters that *tomorrow* is the market; the signs are changed to *today* on Friday. Permanent Farmers' Market flags are left up along with a Friday flag reminding commuters daily about the market; OPEN flags are put up when the market is open for business;

Financial Summary

Grant funds of \$32,166 were expended as indicated on the project budget sheet previously submitted. During the period February 2014 through November 30, 2015 there were receipts of \$44,202.50 (22% from credit cards) and disbursements to farmers & food vendors amounted to \$42,772.50. The balance of \$1,430.00 is being used to pay monthly rental fees for the credit card machine and portable toilet and replacement items, such as banners, signs, tarps and plastic bags.

With all infrastructure and upfront costs paid, the market is covering its operating expenses out of the weekly sales and HARC has no plans to charge rent for the use of the property at this time.

Lessons Learned:

As the year progressed we realized that the pre-order on line and drive-thru option is not

appealing in purchasing fresh produce. While many thought the idea was great when provided cards with the website listed, few avail themselves of the opportunity. When asked about it they stated that they preferred to look and select themselves, even though much of the produce was pre-bagged in plastic.

It was also determined that small family farmers have great difficulty in spending several hours setting up and manning the market. They need to be on the farm practically all the time, tending crops, planting or harvesting for various marketing opportunities. The translator became the organizer, collecting produce, washing, bagging, inventoring, etc for the market. Teenagers of the families with better language skills were recruited to put up signage, greet customers, operate the cash register and bag the produce.

Going forward more effort will be needed to work with the farmers to plan for the longer term to provide a wider variety crops and also partner with other area farmers to provide fruits & other vegetables.

It was also learned that bad weather or holidays rarely affected business. People came in rain or shine. It may have been due to the permanent structure which provides shelter from the weather.



KUNIA FARMER'S MARKET

Opening
on

February 6, 2015

Corner of Kunia Road and Kunia Drive at Kunia Village

Every Friday

3:00pm – 6:00pm

Please join us for over **50 types of fresh locally grown produce** straight from our Kunia Farms and prepared foods from our certified kitchen.

We will also have **drive through pick-up**

for *pre-ordered* items
contact us with your order
or for more information go to

www.kuniafarmersmarket.org



KUNIA FARMERS MARKET

Corner of Kunia Road and Kunia Drive at Kunia Village
1 ½ mile south of Lyman Gate

OPEN

Every Friday

3:00pm – 6:00pm

Please join us for over **50 types of fresh locally grown produce** straight from our Kunia Farms and prepared foods from our certified kitchen.

GO TO FOR SOME SELECTION IDEAS

www.kuniefarmersmarket.org