

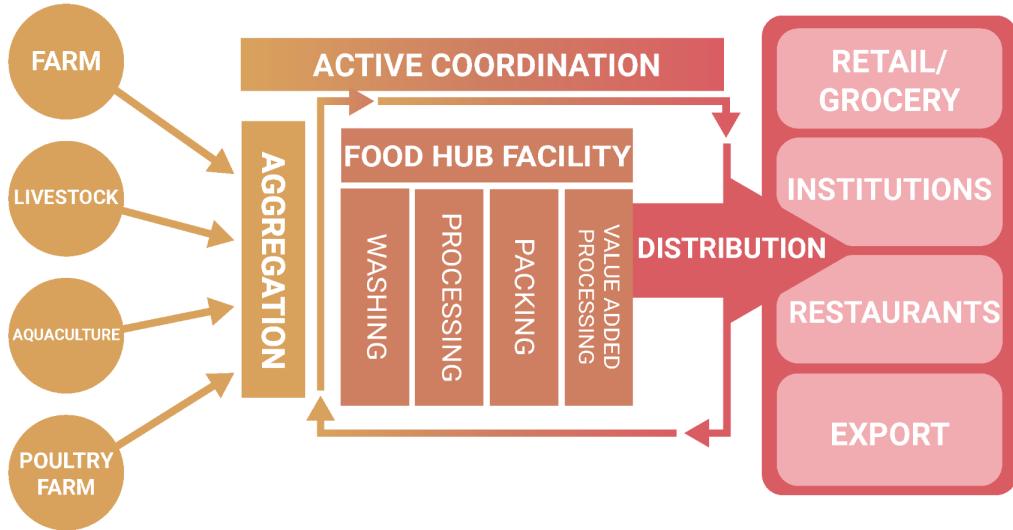


Agribusiness Development Corporation

Ag Notes

FEBRUARY 2022 NEWSLETTER

Proposed Wahiawa food hub would benefit area farmers, economy



One of ADC's agricultural goals was our recent selection of farming tenants to move into the remaining vacant 1,200 acres of our property in the Central Oahu/Wahiawa area. With four agricultural finalists chosen, this allows us to move closer to our benchmark of 100 percent occupancy of these lands and the state's food sustainability goal.

Another important aspect in increasing local food production is shifting our focus towards regional agricultural facilities and economic development. This means facilities involved in the processing and distribution of food products to food vendors and distributors.

The proposed Whitmore Food Hub facility in Whitmore Village in Wahiawa by ADC would provide these functions and is a part of the State's overall plan economically revitalize the Whitmore area.

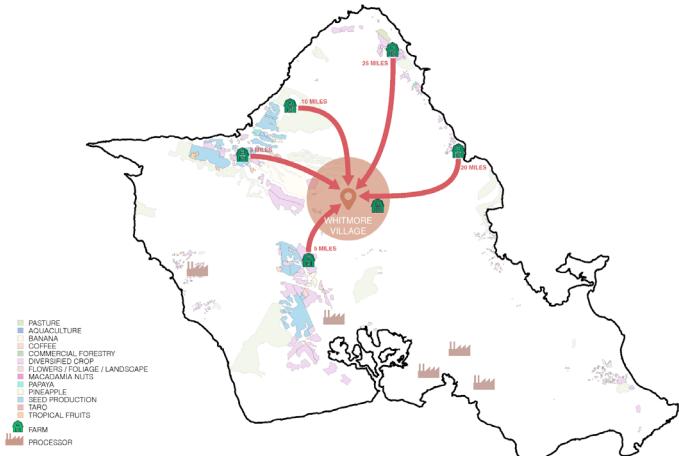
A proposed site for the food hub facility would be located at the former Dole facility along Whitmore Avenue in Whitmore Village. The proposed food complex would house ADC functions and benefit tenants with a singular location for food processing, packing, storage, distribution, office space and workforce housing.

"With the departure of the sugar and pineapple in Central Oahu, this facility would help bring back agricultural operations to the Wahiawa area and help boost the area economy," said ADC executive director James Nakatani. "It would also provide a centralized processing facility area for farmers in the region."

The Whitmore Community Food Hub Project would encompass all ADC activities and provide the following functions:

- A centralized location to decrease costs, time of transportation, and shipping.
- An agriculture-technology park to house software and manufacturing companies that develop technology and equipment for farmers.
- Existing facilities to be retrofitted to comply with the handling, preparation, and storage regulations.
- Agriculture land to be available where farmers could obtain long-term leases to invest in their company.
- Arable land to be converted into active land and achieve scale and diversity of products.
- Co-op opportunities to leverage the high cost of equipment and supplies.
- Workforce housing to be developed to encourage farm labor participation.

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- Public-private partnerships to be explored to incentivize participation in agricultural development.

Staff from the University of Hawaii Community Design Center staff is assisting ADC in developing a study for the proposed food hub center and in conducting community outreach. Several community meetings and presentations have already been held in the Wahiawa area, and ADC will continue to brief the local community on progress of design plans for the proposed facility.

For more information about the project, go to our webpage at: <https://hdoa.hawaii.gov/adc/the-whitmore-project/>

Aiding Farmers in Improving Soil Health



This layer of sun hemp is used as a cover crop as part of the soil health process.

Another important factor that will determine the future and success of local food production is long-term soil health. ADC is part of a working group to study and push for initiatives to improve soil health for farming.

The soil health task force, which first met in March of last year, brought key members from the local ag industry and soil health professionals to the same table in collaboration and cooperation with one another. Along with ADC, some of the other group members include the Hawaii Farm Bureau, Hawaii Farmers Union United, the U.S. and State Departments of Agriculture, and University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources and state lawmakers.

The intention of the working group is to accelerate implementation of soil health practices that build and sustain soil organic matter and humic development

on agricultural land to improve its resiliency, sustainability, and productivity on our way to the development of a supportive agricultural system in Hawai'i. We are now in the demonstration stage in putting forth proposals for funding to develop protocols that raise the microbial vitality and mineral availability of soil for plants to do their best.

Some goals include: promoting cover crop practices; form a state-wide learning community via producer-led workshops and site demonstrations across the islands to promote soil health principles; and create and leverage existing producer incentive programs on each island to accelerate adoption of soil health practices.

Meanwhile, several measures are before state lawmakers this legislative session to assist the local ag industry, including bills that would focus on soil health.

The establishment of a multi-faceted healthy soils program, including a statewide soil assessment, is being discussed by the Senate Agriculture and Environment Committee. Under Senate Bill 2989, the program would require the Department of Agriculture to offer education and assistance on practices that contribute to healthy soils and provide grants to help farmers implement them.

A soil study would also update findings made during the plantation era and benefit diversified ag farmers who now occupy those lands. Lawmakers are also looking at a measure focusing on carbon sequestration under Senate Bill 3325.