



AgriBusiness Development Corporation Newsletter

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Farmers Flourish and Produce Abounds On Kauaʻi



(Above) Jerry Ornellas, of Jerry's Farm, has decades of experience farming on Kauaʻi.
(Left) Mr. Lin, with his nephew, shows off his fruits of labor at his Kauaʻi farm, including tomatoes. (Photos by Pauline Penano)

AgriBusiness Development Corporation (ADC) has many things to be proud of this year — including their growing agribusiness impact across the Garden Isle. As farmland acquisition grows and hiring efforts expand, Kauaʻi farmers are flourishing. To see their leadership, the proof is in the papaya...and tomatoes, bananas and sweet potatoes. Read on for stories from three Kauaʻi farmers with a combined 40+ years in farming.



“For 13 years [I’ve been working] with ADC. You cannot imagine how much support they give to farmers. I’m one of the lucky ones.”
– Judy Liu, Hawai‘i Golden Farm

Hawai‘i Golden Farm is a testament to resilience and dedication, embodied by its founder, Judy Liu. With a vibrant array of crops including Okinawan sweet potatoes, turmeric, and Hawaiian ginger, Liu's journey into farming is as dynamic as the produce she nurtures.

Judy Liu's entry into farming was no accident; it was a calling she believes was orchestrated by a higher power. “Long story short, I do believe that God arranged this so I had to follow His arrangement,” she shares, reflecting on the journey that brought her to Kaua‘i. Over the past 15 years, Liu has cultivated not only crops but also a wealth of knowledge from her experiences across various islands and farming environments.

Farming, as Liu explains, is fraught with challenges—weather fluctuations, pests, and market demands to name a few. “It’s been a 15-year experiment,” she notes. Despite the trials, Liu has embraced her role with a passion that has earned her the nickname ‘gold green thumb’. Her commitment to the craft has solidified her operations over the past three years, including ventures in Honolulu and Hilo.



“I came here in 2002. In 2015, I worked on a farm that was only 3 acres. In 2019, ADC gave me 2 [more] acres. And in 2021, this one, a new one? It’s 21 acres!”
 -Mr. Lin of Lin’s Farm



Since 2015, local farmer Mr. Lin has been cultivating a diverse array of fruits and vegetables on his Kaua’i farm. He grows vegetables such as bok choy, Chinese broccoli, kale, and a variety of salad greens, alongside fruits like bananas, avocados, and papayas. His farm has grown significantly over the years, expanding from 3 acres to a total of 21 acres since ADC acquired new land in 2021.

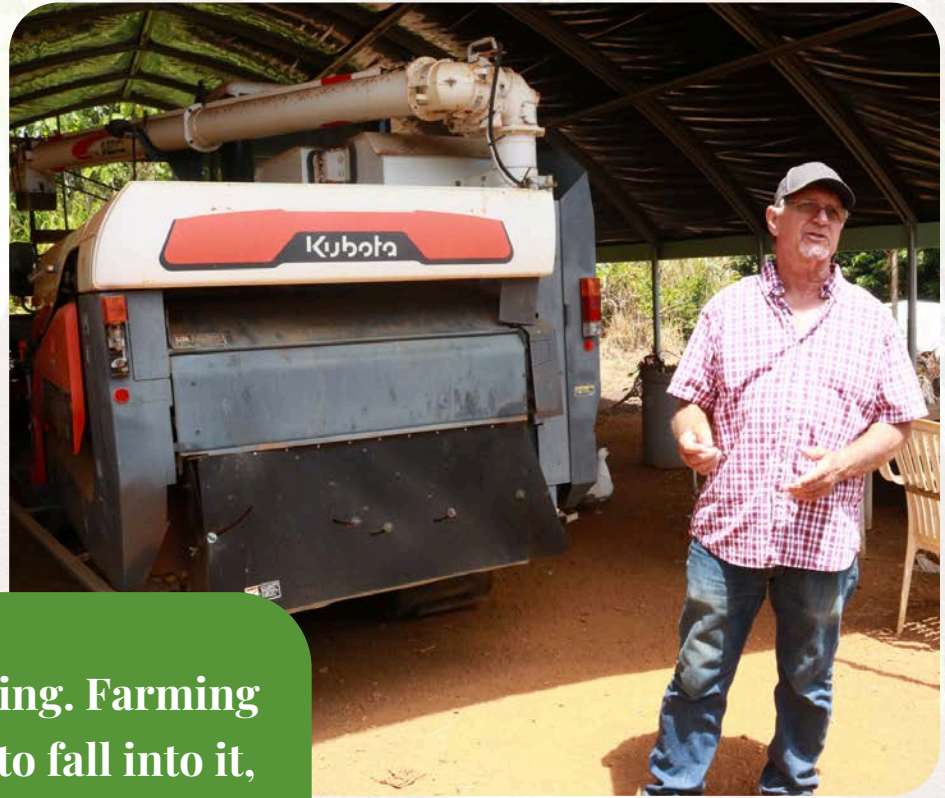
Mr. Lin transitioned to farming after working in a restaurant. He has faced challenges, particularly the need for more land and pest management. To combat these issues, he has constructed 14 greenhouses, which help minimize insect problems and reduce the need for pesticides by utilizing fish-based plant food and chicken manure.



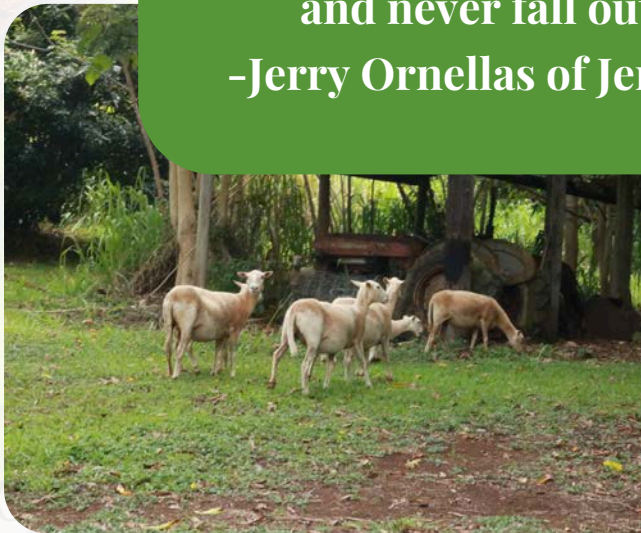
(Left) Mr. Lin’s nephew Xinwei showcases fresh tomatoes from the Kaua’i farm. (Above) Mr. Lin showcases fresh dragon fruit, Buddha’s hand, cucumber, and more.

Jerry Ornellas, of Jerry's Farm in Kapa'a, has been farming for decades. He's known about ADC since the very beginning, when "it was still a concept." He says the biggest challenge for local farmers is making enough money. "It's not just a local problem, as Wendy [Gady, ADC Executive Director] can attest to, but a national problem," Ornellas explains. "Half the farmers in the United States are not profitable right now. We're in a global marketplace, there are factors beyond our control. Our cost of imports, the labor, a need to scale, along with new technology."

When it comes to innovating, Ornellas says, exports are a huge low-hanging fruit (no pun intended). "Why not put everything on the table, including developing export markets? This is nothing new." In the mid-60's, Ornellas remembers, Governor John Burns asked experts to find crops to replace sugar and pineapple, something Ornellas is ready to do: "I want to farm more exotic stuff, like vanilla."



**"I was born into farming. Farming is seductive, it's easy to fall into it, and never fall out of it."
-Jerry Ornellas of Jerry's Farm**



ADC Partners with Local Organizations to help Wahiawā's Houseless

More than 44 houseless individuals in Wahiawā have been placed in shelters or reunited with loved ones following more than six months of community work by ADC, the Wahiawā community, the City and County of Honolulu and nonprofit partners. ADC Property Manager Roger Clemente and ADC Project Manager Ken Nakamoto credit the success to daily, sustained, face-to-face meetings with dozens of houseless people who had been living along a small parcel of newly acquired ADC land in Wahiawā, just off Whitmore Avenue, around Kahi Kani Park. [Read more in Spectrum News here.](#)



(Above) A parcel of Wahiawā land, which will soon become ADC farmland.

More About AgriBusiness Development Corporation



The Hawai'i Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) was established to transform the state's agricultural landscape by leveraging the downsizing of the sugar and pineapple industries into a unique opportunity for growth. With thousands of acres of fertile land and irrigation infrastructure made available, the ADC aims to enhance the local economy, create employment, and reduce reliance on imported agricultural products. By promoting sustainable agricultural practices, developing commercial exports, and facilitating access to farmland and infrastructure for local farmers, the ADC plays a pivotal role in ensuring the economic, environmental, and social benefit of Hawai'i's people through a dynamic and forward-thinking agribusiness program.