

# Home on the Homestead

DHHL /UH CTAHR Molokai Extension Service Livestock Newsletter

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# Range



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## DHHL/Extension: Partnering for a Productive Future

The Agriculture DHHL Technical Assistant position is contracted through UH CTAHR and is housed at the Extension office. This partnership allows direct access to the information and resources available from the UH and CTAHR campuses. This information is non-bias and research based. I look forward to meeting and working with each of you. I am a phone call away: 808-567-6935.



DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOMELANDS



**College of Tropical Agriculture  
and Human Resources**  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

## Taking the Bull By the Horns: It's time to take charge and get back on the right track

Welcome to the latest publication from DHHL and Extension targeting the livestock producers of the DHHL homesteads of Molokai. My name is Jennifer Hawkins and I serve as your DHHL Technical Assistant. I am housed at the Molokai Extension office in Hoolehua (next door to the post office). In the coming months there will be a series of workshops designed to help you as producers take charge of your farm and get the new year off to the right start. In the meantime, here's a check list to get you started:

- ✓ Find and organize all farm related tax papers and receipts.
- ✓ Determine your farm income/loss for the year
- ✓ Set Goals for 2012 and develop a budget based on the goals and the resources available.

# Thinking Outside the Box

You have an agriculture lot.. now what are you going to do with it?

It seems to be that in farming that you must first have a goal, and then you work toward that goal. BUT... in this day and age there are many limiting factors depending on how large your goals may be. Here are some key factors to being successful in agriculture:

- Always start small!
- Know what resources you have available before you start your project.
- Research, Research, Research Is there a market for your product? Are their grants or cost share programs available to assist you. What resources or equipment are required for your product.
- Look around you at what's being grown... Don't grow that crop or raise that animal if you don't want to compete with their market. Maybe value added is the way to go for you.
- If you can't feed it, you don't need it! And if you can't eat it, you may not need it either.
- KEEP GOOD, DETAILED RECORDS! Learn from your mistakes. There's usually a pattern and it's better to be able to look back and identify the problem than to keep repeating it over and over again.

So, you have a lot, now it's time to decide what to do with it.

WATER: First thing's first, you won't grow much if you don't have water!!! Whether it's water catchment or Homestead Ag water, it is a necessity. Did you know that water is actually listed as a nutrient? When's the last time you stood out in the pasture all day, in the heat and wind, with no water to drink. Just think, on average, the typical cow will drink at least a bath tub of water a day. Do you have what your animals need available?

FOOD: Now when we talk about raising grazing animals, the first thing we have to realize is that first and foremost we are a forage farmer (we raise grass) and the livestock is secondary. Know why? That's right, I don't know about you, but feed is expensive and you can put more meat on the table with fewer dollars spent if you manage your forage crop and DON'T overgraze.

Will grass alone meet the animal's requirements? It depends, if you are adding nutrients to the soil based on a soil test recommendation then probably, but if that's not the case, you'll probably need supplemental protein and/or energy.

WEEDS: They can be food too! Whether you utilize intensive grazing to control the weeds or multi species grazing, weeds can be kept under control (usually not totally eradicated) through grazing. Let the goats clean out the browse or broad leaf and woody plants and the cows can glean on the grass!



## Have an Ag Lot and Changed your direction

It happens! You have a piece of land, you decide you WANT to farm, you try it and it doesn't work out. Well, maybe cattle weren't for you, but chickens are (just give me a call at 808-567-6935 and we can sit down and work through your Farm Development and Production Plan. We'll just need to adjust your goals and time line. It's that easy and it may keep you in compliance with the contract you have on file with DHHL.

## Natural Farming: Farming with IMOs (Indigenous Microorganisms)

Seen above, a natural farming piggery on the Big Island. There were no flies and no smell in the piggery. Poop was happening and poop was disappearing by way of indigenous microorganism activity. This is being tried with pigs and chickens on the big island with great success. If you are interested in learning more, feel free to email me at [HawkinsJ@ctahr.hawaii.edu](mailto:HawkinsJ@ctahr.hawaii.edu) and I can get you in touch with the experts.

On the Big Island they are also implementing natural farming with poultry using the original "Hubble Bubble". They are planting gardens for their for poultry and pigs and finding that it is cheaper than commercial feed. Any waste from the garden can be used as green material for the bedding of the piggery or the "Hubble Bubble".

## COWS EAT WEEDS?

By Matt Stevenson, Range Management Professional,  
Assistant Extension Agent- Kauai



New Study Evaluates Methods to Train Livestock to Eat Weeds! A great way to deal with a weed is to turn it into forage. This is the approach behind methods developed on the mainland to manage weeds that have firmly established a foothold in pastures. Of course, the best way to deal with weeds is to not have them in the first place, so diligent monitoring and swift action on new infestations is always important. But what about those plants that just seem to roll on despite your best efforts? Wedelia, bushy beard grass, spiny amaranth, balloon plant or Japanese lantern, and elephantopus are among the repeat offending weeds that ranchers have targeted with herbicide, rotational grazing, and multiple species with limited success.

In collaboration with ranches on Kauai, Maui, and the Big Island and Utah State University, the CTAHR Beef Initiative Group received funding this summer from the USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program to evaluate efficacy of mainland developed methods on tropical weeds. Kathy Voth of Livestock for Landscapes ([www.livestockforlandscapes.com](http://www.livestockforlandscapes.com)) has developed a behavior-based approach to training livestock to overcome their fear of unfamiliar foods and ultimately incorporate weeds to their regular diet. Her work is the application of research generated through the Behavior Education for Humans, Animals, Vegetation, and Ecosystem (BEHAVE) management network centered at Utah State University.

Work began in Hawaii in the late Fall, and preliminary results seem to show that yes, cattle, sheep, and goats will try pasture pests. The lingering questions are: will they continue to eat weeds to no ill effect on their health, reproduction, or meat quality, and will this be enough to keep weeds in check? We will monitor pastures, animals, and meat over three years to get at these questions. Also, for some weeds, further research is required to determine if a supplementation program can help animals deal with plant chemistry. When we complete data collection and analysis, results and recommendations will be presented in workshops throughout the state. Look for updates on the Beef Initiative Group facebook page and through future editions of this newsletter.



Kauai sheep nibbling elephantopus flowers (left), and signs of grazing on target weed at end of training period (right).

Request for Applications  
Molokai Native Hawaiian Beginning Farmers Program - Round Three



We will be accepting applications for Round 3 of the Molokai Native Hawaiian Beginning Farmers Program. Due to increased interest, we have included a Third Round.

***In order to be eligible to participate in this training program, you must meet the following three conditions:***

1. You must be the lessee of an agricultural lot in Hoolehua, or a direct descendant (brother, sister, son, daughter, grandson, granddaughter, etc.) of the lessee. A letter of approval from the lessee is required if you're not the lessee.
2. Your agricultural lot must have access to water from the Molokai Irrigation System.
3. You must commit a ½ acre of your agricultural lot to this project for a year. Except for ripping and disking, this lot must be ready for farming.

Priority will be given to those with limited farming background of three years or less. Participants will be expected to attend a weekly class or field workshop. Through research, you will select your crop and develop a farm production map that will guide you through planting, harvesting, and marketing. We are looking for those with a strong willingness and motivation to farm their agricultural homestead, and encourage only those who are totally committed to farming as a vocation to apply.

With over 7,600 acres of agricultural land, and water available from the Molokai Irrigation System, there are underutilized resources in the Hoolehua Hawaiian Homes area for this kind of training program. With farmers aging nationally, the average age of farmers in Hawaii is 58 years old while the average age of the workforce is 38 years of age. This age gap is of great concern to our leaders. We believe that being able to produce agricultural products we consume is a fundamental function of a sustainable nation and community. With the high cost of food on Molokai, the only option is to expand agriculture so we have affordable food both in quantity and quality.

We have made a commitment to help develop the next generation of farmers to complement those already farming in order to maintain a critical mass of small farmers needed to grow our food, and also increase our food security. Application packets are available from the UH Cooperative Extension Service Office, next to the Hoolehua Post Office, and will explain the program in detail. ***Deadline for turning in your applications is February 9 at 4:00 pm at our office.*** Selections will be made before the end of February, with the program starting in March.

The Molokai Native Hawaiian Beginning Farmer Program is an education and training initiative of the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, Molokai Cooperative Extension Service. This project is funded through a grant from the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture. For more information, please contact our office at 567-6929.



Sometimes eating “what’s available” is more appealing, especially when it’s 110 degrees in the shade. At left: One of my little girls registered Santa Gertrudis heifers having her Sunday afternoon snack in the heat of the AR summer ‘10. Notice, not much grass left there either.

## 2012 DHHL & CTAHR Ag Workshops

Coming Spring of 2012:

- Round 2: Molokai Beginning Beekeeping Class
- Grazing Management School
- Poultry Production Workshop
- Home Garden Workshop Series

Information on these opportunities to be announced soon! Be looking in your next water bill for more information.

### Farm Bill Program Deadline Announced

USDA NRCS announces that it is now accepting application for the Farm Bill Programs (EQIP, WHIP, CSP, AMA). Deadline for application is March 1.

Visit the Hoolehua Field office for details. Please note that producers are welcome to do a conservation plan at any time throughout the year, not just at sign up time.

TIPS:

#1 Identify your problem.

#2 Look for a program that fits your identified problem.

*It’s good to stay in touch with the office throughout the year, not just a sign-up time.*

Happy Reading,

Jennifer Hawkins  
County Extension Agent/DHHL  
Technical Assistant- Molokai

*The University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources Cooperative Extension Service and U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperate in presenting to the people of Hawaii programs and service without regard to race, sex, age, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, disability, marital status, arrest and court record, sexual orientation, or veteran status. The University of Hawaii is an Equal Opportunity/ Affirmative Action institution.*



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