



Agribusiness Development Corporation

Ag Notes

MAY 2021 NEWSLETTER

Mango Season: Longtime ADC Farmer Takes The Next Step In Growing Crop



Wally Johnson's mango farm on Kauai produces nearly 250,000 pounds of mango each year.

Annual mango season is here and longtime mango farmer Wally Johnson can't wait to harvest.

"Always a productive time at our Kekaha farm during harvest season," said Johnson who has been raising mangos on Kauai for 20 years and is one of State Agribusiness Development Corporation's longest tenants.

Along with preparing to haul in this season's crop, Johnson is also ready to take the next step in upgrading and expanding his operations on his 13-acre Kekaha property leased from ADC.

Johnson has already built the first of ten planned greenhouses on his property to better maintain and protect the trees. The structures are designed to grow new mango trees and protect them from the high winds and rains, as well as insects and birds that may feed on the fruit.

"If it gets too windy during stormy

weather, the fruit can easily snap right off," he noted. "The rose-ringed parakeet on Kauai is a problem as well, since a couple of bites can ruin the salability of the fruit."

eventually the younger trees we're growing will take over," said Johnson, who said the controlled environment will allow him to grow a tree to maturity in three years rather than four.



Johnson said one of the motivations for constructing the greenhouses are to raise new mango trees to replace his older ones.

"The oldest trees that we planted 20 years ago still bear fruit, but are not as productive as they used to be, so

The newer trees housed in the greenhouse will also be trimmed and maintained at a smaller height than a normal mango tree.

"Compared to mango trees that naturally grow to about 15-20 in height, these trees will be about 6-8 feet tall,"

Johnson said. "This will make the trees more manageable to maintain and harvest, increase fruit production and create better fruit quality."

Johnson said with mango season usually running from May to October, during a good season he can harvest 20,000-25,000 pounds of mango per acre. It's the Kauai soil and weather conditions that creates good fruit, he claims.

"In my opinion, the Westside conditions are ideal in growing mangoes," Johnson said.

"The rocky soil and dry weather out here creates good sized mangoes with good sugar content."

Johnson already sells his mangoes at Kauai supermarkets, restaurants and farmers markets, but hopes to expand his potential markets.



Kekaha farmer Wally Johnson

"You can use them for smoothies and high end bar drinks," he said. "Mango salsas are good on top of certain fish recipes, with shrimp salad. There are hundreds of ways to use and market mango."

"Mangoes are a pretty nutritious fruit and we'd like to see more mangoes in the farm to school program, maybe have them boxed and shipped to the Mainland," he added. "We keep talking about more local food production. Why not promote something that is really 'local?'"



ADC Central Oahu Tenants To Be Selected Soon



Farmer Shin Ho at ADC's Wahiawa property

The State Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) is currently in the process of selecting qualified applicants to fill its remaining vacant parcels in Central Oahu.

The application deadline was extended to April 29 to allow more farmers and ranchers to apply for potential agricultural and pastoral use on ADC

property.

In transitioning to diversified agriculture, ADC last month accepted applications for our remaining 1,200 acres in the Central Oahu/Wahiawa area. Agriculture-related tenants are expected to be selected later this summer, with the remaining vacant parcels filled by the end of the year.

ADC executive director James Nakatani said: "We want to thank the community for their patience as we prepared these properties for agricultural use."

Multi-year licenses will be issued to farm designated lands, or occupy for pastoral use based on merit. All applications will be rated and only the highest rated applicants will be selected.

ADC is seeking farmers and ranchers with either minimum 5 years farming experience; or are owner-operators of an established farm conducting a substantial farming or cattle ranching operation.

All applications will be rated on a scoring system based on various factors, including years of farming experience, whether the proposed harvested crops appeal to consumers and will generate a profit, and the applicant demonstrates adequate financial ability.