

Ed Otsuji, Otsuji Farms



The following questions were posed to Ed Otsuji, an expert in Direct Marketing, following a workshop he and his son Jonas hosted in the summer of 2012. Questions are specific to Ed & Jonas's operation, and responses offer insight into their success. Additional insights from Ed & Jonas Otsuji, and all of our 2012 Master Farmers, can be found on Oahu RC&D's website.

Q: How do you manage weeds and insects on your farm?

A: Break out the hoe and take out the weeds. We use pesticides to control insects on our farm.

Q: Where do you get seeds for your vegetables?

A: Johnny Seed and Fukuda Seed from Honolulu.

Q: Do you use a specific crop rotation to help manage fertility and/or disease? What other ways do you manage fertility and disease?

A: Yes, just don't grow the same crop twice in the same spot. Also, by adding organic matter like seaweed and tree trimmings to soil.

Q: You have customers at the farm and at the farmer's market. How do you cultivate customer loyalty?

A: Providing quality produce and treating them like family.



Fine quality green onions bring back loyal customers.

Q: What impacts do changes in production such as disease or climate have on marketing your product?

A: It's very minimal because of our mild climate. We also diversify our crops.

Q: How do you handle cash flow and labor needs?

A: Track all expenses and get a good accountant and learn to read a P&L statement. Provide good working conditions and treat employees fair. For labor needs, get referrals from existing employees and volunteers.

Q: How do you plan for and manage these variables?

A: Always be on top of everything.

Q: What are your post-harvest handling protocols? How do you keep the vegetables fresh?

A: Harvest, wash and put in refrigerator as soon as possible.

Q: Otsuji Farm is located in an urban area. Do you have any conflicts with neighbors?

A: Yes. Just give them free veggies.

Q: What was the name of the grass you used to help control erosion? What other ways do you conserve soil and water resources?

A: Vetiver. Make terraces and water less when it rains.



Vetiver, visible on the left side, is used as a conservation practice to reduce erosion.

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