



4-H IMPACT!



HAWAII
4-H YOUTH
DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM

AGventure: Keeping Agriculture Alive with Hawai'i's Youth



The Situation

Engaging youth in agriculture in Hawai'i has been an important topic due to the growing concern that local youth might not view it as a viable career path. Attracting youth to and retaining them in the agriculture sector remains a challenge. Cultivating an interest in agriculture in our youth is a key component to increasing sustainable, responsible farming and ranching in our communities.

Agriculture plays a critical role in the economy of Hawai'i Island. In addition to providing food and raw material, Big Island agriculture can also provide employment opportunities to the residents. Hawai'i Island has a strong tradition of and great opportunities in agriculture, and 4-H is a proven program that helps youth to gain valuable experience in agriculture, leadership, and community service. Together, a strong 4-H program and a thriving agricultural sector are good for the residents of Hawai'i Island.

Our Response

The 4-H program in the Islands has a long and successful record of providing opportunities for experiential learning and leadership development for young people and their families. 4-H programs provide education in many subject areas, one of which is agricultural production skills. Members can learn animal anatomy, feeding, veterinary care, and gardening, as well as additional skills such as record-keeping, accounting, teamwork, and public speaking.

East Hawai'i 4-H decided to address the issue of agricultural awareness and career opportunities by supplementing 4th-grade classes with an event called AGventure. This day-long program focuses on local agricultural careers and entrepreneurial opportunities. The goal is to expose young people to a range of opportunities that are available in agriculture and its corollary businesses. Both established companies and start-up enterprises in agricultural production, processing, distribution, and marketing are involved in the AGventure program.



4-H is delivered by Cooperative Extension—a community of more than 100 public universities across the nation that provides experiences where young people learn by doing. Kids complete hands-on projects in areas like health, science, agriculture and citizenship, in a positive environment where they receive guidance from adult mentors and are encouraged to take on proactive leadership roles. Kids experience 4-H in every county and parish in the country—through in-school and after-school programs, school and community clubs and 4-H camps.



Program Outcomes

The idea behind the AGventure event was to give 4th-grade students the opportunity to learn about agricultural career opportunities in animal husbandry, agribusiness management, agri-science, resource development and management, horticulture, natural resource management, and production agriculture. Participants also learn of opportunities and strengthen their interest in agriculture.

During the AGventure program students not only learned about Hawai'i agriculture and possible careers; they also had an opportunity to engage in hands-on activities that dealt with those careers.

Below is just a small example of some of the topics covered:

- Keeping Food Safe
- Hydroponics
- Cow Wrestling (Learning about the Beef Industry)
- Ranching in Hawai'i
- Cacao & Manufacturing Chocolate
- Impacts of Feral Pigs on Hawai'i Agriculture
- Bee-Keeping in Hawai'i
- Effects of Little Fire Ants on Hawai'i Agriculture
- Snails & Rat Lung Disease
- Hawai'i's Invasive Species/Pests
- DNA Extraction
- Water & Land Management
- Preventing Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death

AGventure reached a total of 1,371 4th-grade students, representing 10 elementary schools and 4 public charter schools.

Measured Outcomes at the Conclusion of the Project

At the conclusion of the program, participants completed a survey to gauge how much they knew about Hawai'i agriculture before and after attending AGventure. Evaluation of the program focused on whether participants had learned anything new; whether they had had fun; whether students wanted to learn more about Hawai'i agriculture, and whether they wanted to have a career in agriculture when they got older. The results were promising:

- ✓ A high percentage of students had had no knowledge or little knowledge of Hawai'i agriculture before the AGventure program; however, following it, they felt they had a better understanding of it.
- ✓ 98% of the students felt they had learned something new about Hawai'i agriculture that they hadn't known before.
- ✓ 93% of the students expressed an interest in learning more about Hawai'i agriculture.
- ✓ 98% said they had fun in the AGventure program, which demonstrates the quality of the program that the presenters gave.
- ✓ 43% of the students expressed an interest in pursuing an agricultural career when they got older.

For more information

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