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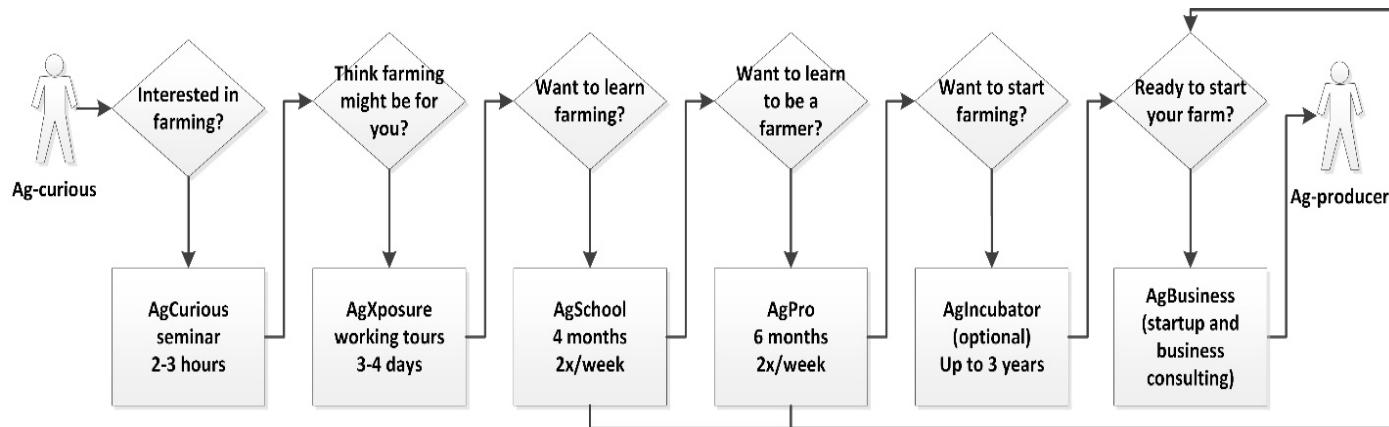
# University of Hawaii's **GoFarm Hawaii:** *A regional new farmer development initiative*

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GoFarm Hawai'i  
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# Project Overview

- Program Description
  - *Enhance Hawaii's food security and economy by increasing the number of local agricultural producers by offering those with an interest in agriculture a combination of knowledge, experience, and support designed to assist them in becoming viable production growers, and accomplish this in a manner that encourages sustainability. 5 program sites across 4 islands*
  - Multi-phased program



- Cohort-based; must take phases in order; must re-apply for each phase
- Classes are evenings and weekends to accommodate people with other full-time employment
- Science-based, experiential + academic,
- Personal accountability



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# Project Overview

- Audience:
  - Adults who aspire to farm commercially in Hawaii
- Approach:
  - Develop new farmers
  - Evaluate curriculum dissemination
  - Determine feasibility of expansion
- Target outcome:
  - 200 learn and practice fundamentals of farming
  - 75 start agribusinesses
  - \$500k in graduate sales
  - Add 1 island, develop and test distance-ed



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# Project Accomplishments

- *Distance learning website created and utilized by all 5 sites*
- *Added Maui and Hawaii islands*
- *Added advanced phases at Leeward and Kauai*
- *\$1.5 in non-federal funds raised*
- Hosted 2 annual statewide beginning farmer/rancher program conference to discuss and collaborate.



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# Impacts and Evaluation

## Impact in the past 3 years:

- 210 graduates
- 79 started agribusinesses through AgPro
- \$75k of food sold to community by program students (AgSchool and AgPro) across all sites
- Success stories: FarmLink Hawaii; Friends with Farms Cooperative; Farm Manager at large local farm;

## Impact in the past year alone:

- \$80k of local produce sales reported by AgIncubator participants
- 81% of program graduates are either continuing in the program, working as ag producers or in ag sector

## Evaluation techniques:

- Entrance/exit surveys; annual longitudinal survey; Focus groups with TKC
- Plan to host annual alumni conference to capture graduate stories and results





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# Lessons Learned & Best Practices

- To help participants commit to farming, foster confidence and resilience, and get participants as close to independent farming as possible
  - Phased program, market-farming, personal accountability, incubation, inter-cohort mentoring and intra-cohort bonding
- Hands-on practical experience is necessary
- Create competition and strict admissions to help identify those who are more likely to commit to commercial Ag path
- Adding advanced phases (AgPro and AgIncubator) increases commitment and likelihood of producing actual commercial scale farmers
- Setting and clearly communicating rules and policies (i.e. Incubator level evaluation benchmarks)
- Host multiple opportunities to foster networking amongst students and local resources
- Monthly Pau Hana (after work) meetings with pot-lucks are popular; keeps connections and provides additional learning opportunities
- Students graduate with an entrepreneurial spirit, we need to remind them of importance of considering apprenticing/working as Ag labor to continue learning
- Always adding to and enhancing curriculum: Value-added training in AgPro, Farm to Table educational events for AgIncubator
- Graduates and social media are promoting the program.



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# Next Year & Beyond

Next round of BFRDP funding will focus on:

- More viable and sustainable farmers for Hawaii
  - Continuing with delivery of curriculum at all 5 sites
  - Adding advanced phases on Hawaii island, Kaua'i & Maui
  - Improving quality and consistency across all sites
  - Increasing reach and content using distance-ed tools
  - Provide ongoing business support
  - Explore and facilitate farmland options for graduates
  - More effective and efficient Beginning Farmer Development in Hawaii through collaboration and shared resources.



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# Questions?

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