



Mealani's Taste of the Hawaiian Range & Agriculture Festival

Sponsored by

University of Hawaii's College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
Hawaii Island Farm Bureau
Hawaii Cattlemen's Association
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Hawaii County Research & Development
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Hawaii Tropical Fruit Growers' Association
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WHAT'S A TRADE SHOW?

A trade show brings producers and buyers together in the same room. As a food producer, you can market your product to a wholesale buyer, distributor, retail buyer or chef. It's an opportunity to meet a buyer face to face, to explain what you do, what you produce and to sell your product.

WHAT ARE BUYERS LOOKING FOR?

Buyers are looking for quality products produced on a consistent basis. They want to be able to get the same thing, day in and day out. You may have a seasonal product, but if its good every year, that's okay. Quality and consistency are key important factors.

Food safety is an important issue for buyers. Are you following food safety standards on your farm, ranch or food processing facility?

Be honest about what you can produce; don't promise and then not deliver. If you are a small farm, can you gear up to produce more to supply a new buyer? Seasonal availability of your product should be spelled out up front.

Buyers want to know what makes your product different or better than someone else's.

- Why is your lettuce better: organic, different variety, better price?
- Is your method of farming different from the conventional?
- Does your farm location contribute to the quality of the product?

Be willing to share information about what you do and why your product is worthy of their interest.

Buyers, especially chefs, are looking for new and different products.

- ✓ An unusual variety of beans or potatoes, a different color of lettuce or broccoli.
- ✓ Some chefs are looking for basic ingredients like carrots, celery, potatoes and leeks; they want them all the time.
- ✓ This may be the opportunity for you to experiment a little with a new crop.

By talking with potential buyers, you may be able to establish a new product for your farm. But remember, be honest and don't promise what you can't deliver.

Buyers will also want to know how you will get your product to them.

- How is your product processed for shipment?
- How will you package your product for shipment?
- Do you deliver?
- Have you checked on shipping your product to another island?
- Does your product have to be refrigerated in transit? Be aware that shipping methods impact product quality – products may look good when you harvest but sitting in a container on the airport tarmac awaiting shipment in the hot sun will no doubt cause damage.

INFORMATION YOU SHOULD TO HAND OUT AT A TRADE SHOW:

- **A product list that includes the price of your products.** Be sure this piece of paper includes the name of your farm, address, phone number, email address and contact person's name.
- **Business card** with the same information as above.

AFTER THE SHOW

Following up on contacts is part of the selling process. If someone has expressed interest in your products, call them after the show and remind them. If someone has said they want to order your product, be the one that gets that order going. Follow up on unanswered questions, shipping issues or inquiries about future products. You have to make the sale happen!

Many buyers will want to visit your farm before starting a relationship. Buyers may want to examine your operations: how you grow, process and pack your products and how you conduct business. ***Be prepared for a farm visit; better yet, invite them to visit.***