



# A Review of Guam's Farmer/Chef Program Efforts in the Pre-COVID Decade in Order to Plan for the Next Decade

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# How We Got Started

- In 2007 the USDA Western Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (WSARE) Program funded a sub-regional conference on Guam to review the past 20 years successes in sustainable agriculture and plan for the next 20.
  - Attendees came from across the Pacific and participated in needs assessment, we found the islands needs were very similar.
  - Agricultural Marketing issues ranked among the top identified these included.
    - The need to link agriculture industry to the tourism industry.
    - The need for farmer organizations like Co-Ops
    - The need to replace imports with local products.
    - The importance to examine the success of Hawaii in these areas and adapt their successes to our islands.

# First Step: Start Communications

- Following the conference the “Guam Farmers’ Cooperative Association” (Co-Op) was formed.
- Guam Hotel and Restaurant Association, the Farmers’ Co-Op, UOG CES and Department of Ag. ADS signed a MOU to work together for 3 years promoting use of local fruits and vegetables.
  - This started formal communications.
  - By the partners attending meetings together joint activities were planned programs and grants developed.

# Second Step: Joint Activities

- Some of the early activities involved modifying existing public events to focus on local fruits and vegetables, these included:
  - Pastries in Paradise & Taste Guam
    - Local fruits & vegetable from the Co-Op and UOG were the focus of the events.
  - Micronesian Chefs Association was brought into the partnership through these events.
  - Joint events continued and expanded over the past 4 years.
- Grants were applied for by the partners.

# Grants supporting these efforts

- WSARE awarded a grant to take a team of farmers and chefs to Kona to attend the Hawaii Tropical Fruit Growers Meeting and the Farmer Chef meetings held in Kona Hawaii.
  - We brought back ideas for events and grants
- The Co-Op obtained a Rural Development, Cooperatives grant
  - Supported many joint educational activities with the GHRA, MCA and UOG.
- UOG CES obtained a WSARE grant to develop Farmer/Chef linkages

# Activities Facilitated by the Grants

- In meetings with the Chefs and GHRA the need for seasonality information was identified, so grants funded Jesse Bamba of UOG CES to develop two seasonality calendars one for fruits and one for vegetables.
  - GHRA Chef and Purchasing Manager surveys indicated an unfamiliarity with what is available locally and when.
- The Co-Op periodically brought displays of “What’s Fresh Now” to MCA meetings and to familiarize chefs with local products and serve as focus for discussions.
- A survey of chefs and restaurants’ purchasing practices, prices, and needs was conducted to help identify potential market interventions.



# Seasonality Posters/Charts

The image displays two posters from the University of Guam Cooperative Extension & Outreach. The top poster is titled "GUAM FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SEASONALITY CHARTS" in bold yellow text on a green background. Below this, there are two smaller posters: "GUAM-GROWN FRUITS Seasonality Chart" and "GUAM-GROWN VEGETABLES Seasonality Chart". Both posters feature a grid showing the seasonal availability of various fruits and vegetables, with columns for months (Jan to Dec) and rows for different produce items. The fruit poster has an orange header and a yellow QR code labeled "SCAN ME". The vegetable poster has a green header and a green QR code labeled "SCAN ME". Both posters also include sections titled "Why Buy Local?" and "Support local farmers!".

**GUAM FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SEASONALITY CHARTS**

**GUAM-GROWN FRUITS Seasonality Chart**

**GUAM-GROWN VEGETABLES Seasonality Chart**

**Why Buy Local?**

Support local farmers!

Scan the QR code!

**UNIVERSITY OF GUAM COOPERATIVE EXTENSION & OUTREACH**

# Activities Facilitated by the Grants

- The chefs suggested working with existing wholesale companies to develop new market channels for local produce to chefs.
  - International Distributors Inc. and the Farmers Co-Op piloted a project to provide year-round cherry tomatoes at a stable quantity and price.
- With the WSARE funds the quarterly Farmer/Chef Farm Grill nights were started.
  - Combines farm tours, seasonality displays and chef competitions using a black box of local produce. Increases chefs' familiarity with unique local produce items. Increases farmers awareness of chefs' needs.
- We need to explore new venues and partners.



# Farmer/Chef Farm Grill Nights: Black Box (for 100) Competition



# Where We are at Now

- We learned we need to reach out to not just Chefs but also Purchasing Managers/staff
- COVID interrupted progress on most fronts.
- Now is the time to collect ideas and information to plan the direction and activities of the next five years.
- We look forward to your input.