

FEATURE – USDA GRANT HELPS HAWAII FARMER CONTROL PESTS

INTRO: A US Dept of Agriculture conservation grant is helping a Hawaiian farmer control pests. The USDA's Bob Ellison has more. (1:53) (refeed)

PICKLEWORMS, MELON THRIPS, WHITEFLIES AND OTHER INSECTS HAVE LONG BEEN THREATS TO WEI CHONG HO'S 40-ACRE VEGETABLE FARM, ON THE ISLAND OF OAHU. HIS LONG TERM GOAL OF REDUCING THE USE OF PESTICIDES GOT A BOOST FROM A RECENT CONSERVATION INNOVATION GRANT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE. THE GRANT HELPED HO PURCHASE NETS TO COVER HIS CUCUMBERS, TOMATOES, SQUASH AND OTHER CROPS.

Wei Chong Ho, Hawaii Farmer: Because the farmer, he touches the soil more than the city people. We got to take care.

WEI CHONG'S DAUGHTER, WHO ALSO WORKS ON THE FARM, SAYS THE RESULTS FROM THE GRANT MATCH WHAT THEIR CUSTOMERS WANT.

Shin Houy Ho, Hawaii Farmer: It's really important for consumers today to know that they are getting safe, healthy food or produce and that it is coming from a farm that practices conservation. I think it's a very important selling point too.

AND THE INTENT OF THE GRANT IS BEING MET, ACCORDING TO THE HO'S CONSERVATION PARTNER, NRCS.

Jolene Lau, USDA-NRCS: He wants to minimize the use of chemicals. He's not just thinking about his product and having it pest free, but he's thinking about his resources and how what he does on the land affects his neighbors, everyone down stream from him. When the results show what a difference it makes, how their innovative idea reduced the use of chemicals, this shade house could be used by any of the farmers for any type of crop in the Pacific Islands area.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CONSERVATION GRANTS AND OTHER PROGRAMS VISIT YOUR LOCAL USDA SERVICE CENTER OR NRCS.USDA.GOV.
FOR THE US DEPT OF AGRICULTURE, I'M BOB ELLISON.