

PROFILES IN soil health



Barbara Nobriga

Kealakekua, Hawaii

Operation: livestock

Practices: fence, pipeline, brush management, and pasture planting

Local Rancher Cares for Soil Health

Soil health is a product of our environment and when we have some poor examples, it's refreshing to come into a place that is seemingly well kept, with nice green grass and the animals are clean and healthy.

Making the Change

At Mehealani Ranch, Barbara Nobriga planted nitrogen-producing legumes such as Glycines, Desmodiums, and White Dutch (clover) to put nutrients back into the soil to promote better grass growth and healthier cattle.

"If you don't have well balanced soil, you're not going to have well balanced growth."

- Barbara Nobriga, rancher

Soil health reflects good land stewardship. When you are taking care of the soil, the grasses are affected. For example, prescribed grazing is when you allow the pasture to rest for several months. At Mehealani Ranch, a rotational system maintains soil health.



The Practices

The Kona coast is very dry so water is precious. Mehealani Ranch has been in a drought situation for more than 30 years. With help from NRCS, Mehealani Ranch installed practices to collect and maintain water through critical times.

In addition to the fence, pasture planting, and prescribed grazing, NRCS is helping Mehealani Ranch with pipeline from a water catchment above to the troughs below.



Water troughs are filled via pipeline from a water tank.

Healthy Results

For Barbara Nobriga, the most satisfying result is seeing the grass grow nice, green, and lush. She gets a good response from those who buy the Ranch weans. Her customers say the weans are in very good shape and are very healthy. Even their avocado trees are taking off from the attention to soil health.

She says, " Poor soil health will definitely affect our bottom line. Everyone should be cognizant of the fact that you must take care of your land if you want good production."



Water tanks are filled from a catchment system.

Contact

Jessica Schmelz, NRCS District Conservationist in Kealakekua at (808) 322-2484 or Jessica.Schmelz@hi.usda.gov.

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