

PROFILES IN soil health



Oliver English

Hilo, Hawaii

Operation: ranch

Practices: prescribed grazing

Local Rancher

Encourages Soil Health

Ranching in Hawaii is different than the mainland. There are all kinds of challenges from shipping, seed approval, additional costs, and the limited availability of items. Even simple water fittings, wire, and fertilizer cost more, so Oliver English encourages other ranchers to consider soil health practices that save time and money.

Making the Change

Farmers and ranchers are interested in trying new methods for soil health, but there is a fear of failure.

"Basically we farm grass and use cattle as a maintenance tool."

- Oliver English, rancher

Oliver wants others to know that we need to start caring about our soil because it can't be the thing that is forgotten in the corner. "Soil is what puts the food on the table and if we are not taking care of it, it is not going to be able to take care of us," stated Mr. English.



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profiles in soil health

Oliver English, Hilo

Through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Oliver English receives technical and financial assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The Practices

Prior to ranching, Oliver English used to work in the tractor business. Today, with a focus on land stewardship, he is using cows to "cow-doze" instead of bulldozers. NRCS is helping Oliver with brush management, pasture planting, fence, a livestock water distribution system, and prescribed grazing. Together, their goal is to maintain good soil health, manage the existing system, and use the land more efficiently. Oliver incorporates intensive grazing management with a high stocking rate and adequate rest periods. The results include grazing uniformity, better distribution of manure for increased biological activity in the soil, and increased water retention in his rocky, shallow soils.

Healthy Results

For Oliver English, better soil health means better food quality, cleaner water and air, and an overall increase in products. It's all part of a cycle that works together to make things better. On his ranch, Oliver noticed obvious results such as healthier cattle and increased stocking rates compared to ranching without soil health practices. He also notices a decrease of input costs and an increase in profit.

Contact

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Kori Hisashima inspects a water trough with Oliver.



Oliver English discusses forage health with Kori.

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