



PACIFIC ISLANDS AREA

PROFILES IN soil health



Antone De Luz
(with his son Duane De Luz)
Honoka`a, Hawaii
Operation: ranching
Practices: prescribed grazing

Local Rancher Leaps Ahead with Soil Health

Founded in 1994, Triple D Ranch is a 505-acre ranch on Hawaii Island. From the beginning, they've been proactive partners in conservation with the Hamakua Soil and Water Conservation District and NRCS. The De Luz family uses low-stress animal handling and intensive grazing management to produce healthy, grass-finished cattle on the ranch.

Making the Change

The ranch is on former sugar cane land. The terrain is steep and the soil health was poor. The area had also been plagued by drought that lasted over six years. With help from the NRCS, the De Luz family started hand-planting a variety of forage species in their pastures to build forage diversity and pasture resilience.

"Put yourself in the animal's position. Do they have clean water? For me, my animals eat and drink before I do."

- Antone De Luz, Hawaii Rancher

The Practices

Over the years, with help from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the ranch has controlled invasive weeds; reduced soil erosion; planted improved forages; installed fences, pipelines, troughs, and a water harvesting catchment system; and implemented an intensive grazing management system.



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Healthy Results

The goal for Triple D Ranch has always been to finish cattle on grass and keep their livestock on the island. By caring for their resources - their soil, plants, water, and animals - they have developed a resilient system that allows them to do just that.

Their cattle have an abundance and diversity of healthy grass, supported by strong, healthy protected soils. The diversity in the pastures help them to continue to be productive even through droughts. The health of the soil allows the land to absorb and better utilize local rainfall rather than having it run off. Low-stress animal handling techniques keep the cows happy and calm, allowing them to efficiently and productively transform grass into high-quality protein that is consistently labeled as "prime" and "choice."

Through the successful cooperation and partnership with the NRCS, Triple D Ranch is an exceptional model for what is possible on tropical grasslands when technical expertise is combined with passion, experience, and hard work.

Contact

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Scenic view from Triple D Ranch in Hawaii County.



Duane De Luz with stress-free happy cows at Triple D.

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