

THE INDEPENDENT VOICE

Newsletter of the Kona Coffee Farmers Association

May 2008

PO Box 5436 Kailua Kona Hawaii 96745 USA

www.konacoffeefarmers.org

info@konacoffeefarmers.org

Contents

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Organic Workshop..... | 1 |
| Calculating Crop..... | 1 |
| Natural Slug and Snail Control..... | 1 |
| Letter to the Editor..... | 2 |
| Upcoming Events..... | 2 |
| Where to Buy Kona Coffee..... | 2 |
| Membership Information..... | 2 |
| Editor – Christine Sheppard | |

Organic Kona Coffee Workshop

SIGN UP NOW!

Sunday, May 18 from 8:30-11:30am at Kona Rainforest farm.

Fertility and Weed Control appropriate for organic Kona farmers will be the two main topics presented. Information about co-op plans related to bringing in inputs as a group, as well as Marketing tips will also be addressed.

FREE to members!

\$10 for non-members (which may go, if you choose, towards a \$25 membership fee if you wish to join the group).

Contact Colehour Bondera for directions and details, 640-1643 or colemel@kanalanifarm.org

How Many Bags?

How many bags of cherry can one expect from an acre of coffee?



A good question; there seems to be many answers. We have all heard of 100 bags per acre even 150. George Yasuda says that you should get 125 to 145 if the orchard is well planted and managed. CTAHR's "Growing Coffee in Hawaii" indicates 164 bags

per acre in the 1989-1991 Hawaii State coffee trial for Kona Typica, but at 1174 trees per acre is more dense than typical on farms.

Asking around I variously get ranges from 80 bags as doing well at high elevation and maybe 50 bags at very low elevations. I am sure I will get lots of disagreement on these figures so please forward any actual experience you may have under today's conditions.

For fun I took the published Hawaii Agricultural Statistics from NASS, (<http://www.nass.usda.gov/hi/speccrop/coffee.htm>) converted the green yield to cherry using a factor of six (good enough for this exercise), divided this by the number of acres harvested and dividing by 100 to get the estimated bags of cherry per acre. The results are below.

Bags of cherry per acre:

| Season | Hawaii State | Kauai, Maui, Oahu | Hawaii county |
|--------|--------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 97/98 | 80 | 83 | 73 |
| 98/99 | 75 | 73 | 77 |
| 99/00 | 76 | 86 | 60 |
| 00/01 | 62 | 59 | 67 |
| 01/02 | 61 | 68 | 53 |
| 02/03 | 60 | 53 | 67 |
| 03/04 | 67 | 70 | 64 |
| 04/05 | 47 | 47 | 47 |
| 05/06 | 65 | 41 | 85 |
| 06/07 | 54 | 49 | 55 |

Interestingly the numbers for Kauai, Maui and Ohau counties (but is mostly Kauai) do not always follow Hawaii county (which is mostly Kona). Is this weather patterns or some other of the many factors? Kauai is irrigated so one would expect it to be less variable than

Kona which is generally not irrigated.

In the next table are the percentage differences for Kauai, Maui, Oahu counties, bags per acre, compared to Hawaii county.

| Season | K, M, O% compared to Hawaii county |
|--------|------------------------------------|
| 97/98 | 114% |
| 98/99 | 95% |
| 99/00 | 143% |
| 00/01 | 88% |
| 01/02 | 128% |
| 02/03 | 79% |
| 03/04 | 109% |
| 04/05 | 100% |
| 05/06 | 48% |
| 06/07 | 89% |

As you can see the reported numbers do not come anywhere near 100 to 164 bags per acre. The NASS figures obviously include a variety of farms with different conditions and practices so it is to be expected that the numbers would be a bit lower. But maybe these are **realistic** numbers for planning purposes. Be pleasantly surprised when you do better!

Of particular interest is the wide variation year to year, this should also be factored into the planning process.

Ken Sheppard
kensheppard@Hawaii.rr.com

Got Kona Blend? Here's a great use for it....

Did you pick up, or someone give you by mistake, a package of Kona Blend? Well, you aren't going to drink that 90% foreign fumigated stuff, and it is unkind to re-gift it, so here is a great use for it.

Researchers reported in *Nature*

magazine that slugs and snails hate caffeine, and it could become an environmentally acceptable pesticide.

At the DoA's Agricultural Research Service in Hilo, Robert Hollingsworth and his colleagues were testing caffeine sprays against the coqui frog.

They noticed that a 1 to 2 percent caffeine solution killed nearly all the slugs and snails within two days. Concentrations as low as 0.01 percent were a deterrent. A cup of drip brewed coffee has about 115 mg of caffeine which is just a little shy of 1 percent caffeine.

Coffee grounds are already recommended as a home remedy for keeping slugs and snails at bay. Grounds repel slugs, Hollingsworth found, but a caffeine solution is much more effective. The slugs turn back immediately after contacting the caffeinated soil.

How does caffeine repel slugs and snails? Caffeine is an alkaloid with a bitter taste, and is found in the beans, fruit and leaves of over 60 plants where it acts as a natural pesticide that kills certain insects trying to feed off the plants. It is more effective against slugs than many of the chemical products that are dangerous to pets and wildlife. It may even qualify as organic.

"I would expect caffeine applications to kill small snails and slugs, and repel the larger ones," says Hollingsworth. He envisions it being used in greenhouses and on fruit and vegetable crops.



So brew your inferior coffees as a spray, and take out the grounds from your good Kona too and sprinkle them around your tender crops.

For the complete article on slug control visit this excellent website by Marion Owen <http://www.plantea.com/slug-baits-coffee.htm>

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Lack of rain fall is usually blamed for the smaller coffee crop and we have no control of the rain.

As Kona Coffee farmers for the last 20 years, we strongly believe that the twig borer is having an enormous impact on crop yield. If you drive up into the coffee land of South Kona, you will see many absolutely dead laterals, caused by the tiny twig borer. We have found that the twig borer is even killing some of the tops of the verticals.

This growing problem needs to be given a high priority for research on control mechanisms. Perhaps the KCFA could start a dialog with the State Department of Agriculture or the UH Extension Service. If nothing is done, as is the current case, yields will continue to decline.

*with aloha,
Bob and Cea Smith*

Upcoming Events

June will be a busy month! We start with.....

Coffee Fest

Come and see what's new, and visit the KCFA booth #114. The specialty coffee trade show takes place from noon-5pm on Friday June 6 and Saturday 7, and will close at 4pm on Sunday 8th; with more than 130 booths.

To register for the show, please go to www.coffeefest.com or call 425.283.5058, ext. 123 or 128.

Seed Exchange

Share seed, cuttings, roots, hulis, etc. of successful food crops that grow well on your farms and in your gardens. Amy Greenwell
Ethnobotanical Garden June 21st
from 8:30 am.

This year they will be offering camping at the garden the evening before the Exchange, Friday June 20. Anyone who is bringing "seed or plant materials" to exchange with the community the next day may camp.

They will have a dinner buffet Luau (imu and potluck) and buffet breakfast the following morning for the guests. After dinner on Friday they will have a bonfire, storytelling and music.

Reservations required to

nredfeather@kohalacenter.org

KCFA will be there with our Coffee Shack and booth.

Lanihau Center

KCFA's Kona Coffee Fair at Lanihau Center is June 28th. Mark your calendar! We will again be doing a People's Choice tasting competition, as well as having our goods for sale and education table. More details on the event and the tasting competition will be sent by email to members.

Coffee Processing Techniques for Small Farms

Workshop on how to take your coffee from cherry to roast. CTAHR meeting room, Kainaliu. July 5th at CTAHR.

Contact Ken Sheppard for details, 329-7239
kensheppard@hawaii.rr.com

Looking for Great Kona Coffee?

Find a family farm in Kona whose commitment to quality matches your own.

The internet makes it easy to order coffee from estate farms. Bypass the maze of misleading labels and marketing hype. Realize the quality of a cup of real Kona Coffee and trace it to the exact spot on a Kona mountainside where it grew.

Talk to farm families about their coffee. Because so many of the farms are smaller than 5 acres, individual and small retailers' orders are welcome.

Check out farm-direct coffee on our website www.konacoffeefarmers.org

Join or Renew Today!

The Kona Coffee Farmers Association was founded to protect and promote 100% Kona coffee, and to support and provide an independent voice to the farmers who grow Kona coffee. We are a member-driven organization and encourage member input at all times. Regular membership is \$25, Associate (non-farmer) membership is \$20. This gains you free entrance to our workshops, so is a great deal.

Find information and join online at www.konacoffeefarmers.org