

Ulupono: Hawai'i Dairy Farms Proposal

The Ulupono Initiative proposes to locate about 1,800 head of dairy cows on about 582 acres of pristine land in Mahaulepu, which is about 2.5 miles mauka from the Grand Hyatt Kaua'i Resort and Spa in Po'ipu.

Arial View of Proposed Dairy



ArcReader Document – 20111205 Grove Farm. Source: *The Garden Island*, 2.26.2014

Issue #1: The 1,800 cows will produce about 144,000 pounds of manure per day or some 247 pounds per acre per day. An acre (43,560sq ft) is about the size of a football field (45,000sq ft). This aggregates to about 52.5 million pounds of cow manure annually.

Issue #2: The proposed \$17.5 million dairy will only employ 10-15 local workers.

Issue #3: The 1,800 cows will be divided into six (6) groups of about 300 per group. Each group will range on slightly less than 100 acres, which are divided into 18 paddocks of about 5.5 acres per paddock. Cows will rotate daily through the 18 paddocks. See *A. Dairy Land Use Schematic*. There will be some 50-60 cows per acre on each acre in the paddock. This is overcrowded conditions. See *B. Cow Population Density*.

A. Dairy Land Use Schematic: 6 Lots of about 100 acres for 1,800 Cows

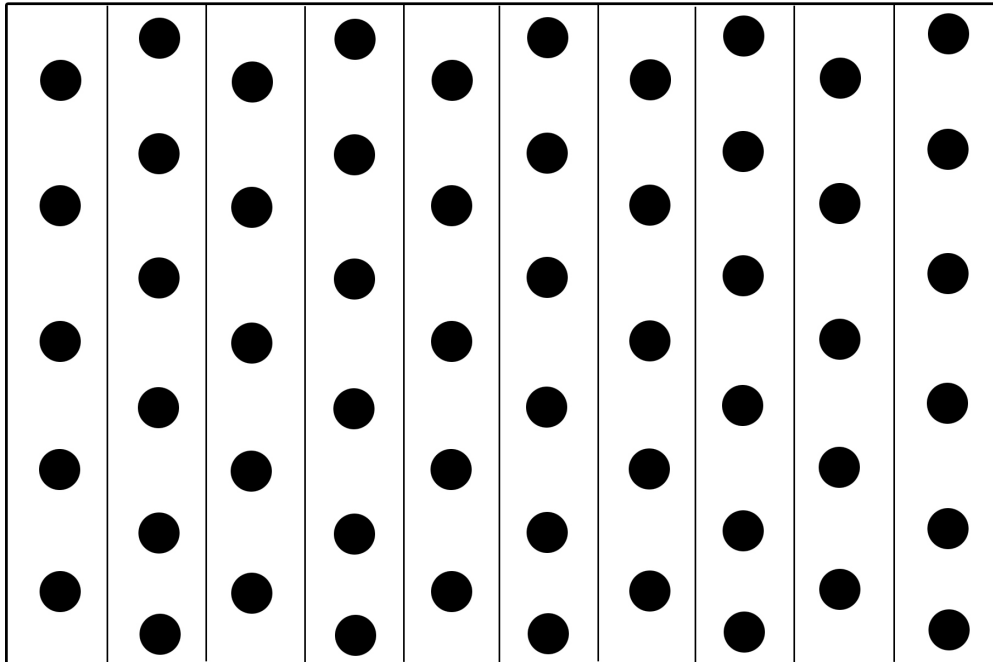
300 Cows
100 acres

1	18								
2	17	2	3	4	5	6			
3	16								
4	15								
5	14								
6	13								
7	12								
8	11								
9	10								

$100/18 = 5.5$ acres/section
50-60 cows per acre

Cow Population Density

55 Cows per Acre



1 acre = Football Field

Dairy poses serious threat to Poipu

Beverley Ellul, posted *TheGardenIsland*: 2.22.15

My husband and I own a small condo in the Poipu area and we will be retiring to the beautiful island of Kauai within the next 3 years. We were so shocked to hear that there is a possibility of an industrial dairy farm being constructed on Mahaulepu with a herd of up to 2,000 cows. My first thought was “What are they thinking?” and “I must have heard this wrong.” With all the strict regulations that the county government has for building height, street light wattage, swimming pool construction, protection of the wildlife, etc., I never thought that something like this would be a possibility. We chose Kauai as a place to retire because Kauai, of all the Hawaiian Islands, seemed to have their act together when it came to the preservation of true Hawaii.

WHAT HAPPENED?

My mother was raised in a dairy farming family. My grandparents were dairy farmers and a number of generations before them were as well. They all used “sustainable” and “grass-fed” farming practices. My cousins continued the family dairy farming up until just recently.

My family’s farm consisted of 100 acres with a total of 25-30 humanely treated adult purebred Holstein cows. They grazed daily in the summer, spring and fall on 10-20 acre pastures in a rotational manner to preserve the soil. The land was also used to grow all of the feed required for the animals. They ate only food grown on the land within the 100 acres. Crops (no corn) were grown and stored for winter feed and to augment feed when they arrived in the barn for milking twice a day. This was and is sustainable grass-fed dairy farming.

HDF is proposing a “grass-fed” dairy with cows grazing on 500 acres of land that is within [4/5th](#) of a mile of the Pacific Ocean at Mahaulepu. They plan to start production with 699 cows and then move to 2,000 cows over time. In HDF’s proposal, at start-up they will have 115 cows in each 4 acres of paddock area per day and at full production 330 cows on each of these paddocks.

While 500 acres sounds like a lot of land to graze 699-2,000 cows on, basically it means that during the start-up phase, seven cows would be grazing and defecating on 10,000 square feet of “pasture,” the size of a standard house lot. At full production at least 17 cows would graze and defecate on the same area.

According to the EPA a dairy cow defecates at least 120 pounds of wet manure every day. In their Waste Management Plan, page 42, HDF reports that they anticipate their dairy cows will each weigh 1,200 pounds and produce 143 pounds of wet manure per cow daily. Using HDF’s own waste expectations, at full production HDF’s 2,000 cows would produce 2,648 pounds of wet manure on a 10,000 square foot area every day! Imagine having more than one ton of manure added to your lot daily. My husband and I live in a house on a lot of about 10,000 square feet. As I write this and look out my window and try to understand the impact of the concentrated rotational dairy proposed by HDF, I can’t imagine anything left of my yard after 17 cows graze, defecate and urinate for even one day.

According to HDF, the cows rotate through the grazing paddocks, returning to the pasture paddocks first grazed every 18 days. Not only will the grass be unlikely to re-generate in that interval but the manure will still be wet and likely contribute to hoof rot when trampled by the returning herd.

The dense grazing will not only sicken the cows, there is also a very real risk to the public's health. There were cases of E. coli in 2006 that were caused by spinach contaminated by feces from cattle nearby. There were three deaths and many were sickened. With all the rain on Kauai, won't there be a risk of contamination just by run-off? Will the flies carry disease to our food or any containers we eat from?

What about the chemicals that will be used to clean the cows and the milking structure? I know they use iodine to wash cow udders. When that gets into the run-off, who or what does that harm?

In the Poipu area, we have wildlife that is already protected like the monk seal and the sea turtle. We also have a tremendous number of fish species living on the reefs on the island. Will they be harmed from the run-off? Will the humpback whales stop swimming by?

I have only touched on a few concerns if this project were allowed to go forward. Everyone needs to push to stop this and keep the Poipu area pristine and ensure an ongoing economy in tourism. If this industrial dairy farm is allowed to pass it will probably be the cause of many health issues (especially for children), wildlife loss from the run-off and the loss of many jobs in the tourist industry. The tourists will not come to visit due to the overwhelming smell and fly problem.

There are many more concerns if this project is allowed to move forward. I feel it should be everyone's responsibility to stop this project. We need to keep the children healthy, save the wildlife's habitat and preserve the Poipu area as a thriving tourist destination.

Beverley Ellul is a resident of San Jose, California.