Big Island Report:
HAW-FLYPM Cooperator List Growing
Thanks to King Kamehameha Day
L. M. Klungness

King Kamehameha Day Celebrations at Kapa‘au brought in the people, and we were ready for them. Hannah Revis, Beth Robards and Charles Lee await the crowds with posters in place (see picture, top). Hannah passed out literature and showing the public the species of fruit flies in the glass cages (below). Charlie helped homeowners make bottle traps with the new “gummy bear” lures inside (bottom). At the same time, Beth and I signed up interested homeowners.

This has helped increased the number of signed cooperators from 206 to 218, and added 25 names to the newsletter mailing list. These new cooperators were largely from the Kohala District, but some were from as far away as Kailua-Kona, Pahoa, Puna on the far side of the Island. Our total cooperator acreage has gone up to 1821, and, although we have not yet been able to measure all the new properties, the productive acreage is at least 670 acres over the whole island. 

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The big question is whether the area wide program is really helping the growers. Apparently, some of our growers are convinced that it helps. Here is a letter we received from Brooks Wakefield. She and her husband Billy (previous, below) have an organic mango farm in Kona:

My husband, Billy, and I want to thank you and your office for your help and continued support in the battle against the Oriental and melon fruit flies. The workshop that the Hawaii Area Wide Fruit Fly Integrated Pest Management Program gave, the colorful and informative brochures, the supplies, and the personal interest that you have given us and our farm, has helped us immensely. As you know, we have five acres planted in certified organic mangoes. Since the beginning of this year’s mango season, our rate of fruit infested with fruit fly larvae has plummeted from most fruit being infested, to very few fruit.

We feel that fighting these horrendous pests using all of the methods that you showed us, is making a huge impact on our ability to harvest and sell a much larger volume of mangoes. Per your advice, we cleared our orchard of any fruit that may fall on the ground, we spray with GF120 every 7 to 10 days, and we have hung about 15 pheromone “dry traps” throughout the orchard.

Please extend our thanks to your office and we thank you for sharing your knowledge and time so that we may operate a viable farming business in our state, which is plagued with fruit flies. Your personal dedication and commitment to this outstanding project is invaluable!

Sincerely,
Brooks and Billy Wakefield
Wakefield & Sons, Inc.
DBA Ho‘omalu Farm