

HAWAII SBDC SUCCESS STORY - EAST HAWAII CENTER



PUNACHICKS FARM

Emily and Yoric Taaroa are passionate about providing the community with wholesome, local, fresh food. They realized there was market for locally raised poultry in Hawai'i, so in May 2013 they started their family farm to offer an alternative to factory farmed chicken and fill the restaurant demand for locally sourced ingredients. Punachicks Farm began on 5.5 acres of leased land and recently moved to 25 acres purchased in Kurtistown in order to expand their operation and build a new processing building.

Their Cornish Cross chicks are hatched in Oahu and shipped to Hilo. After time in the brooder, chickens are raised in floorless pens moved daily to provide grass, bugs, fresh air and sunshine, along with organic feed. They avoid use of chemicals on their pastures and in chicken production, so customers can trust they are getting clean food.

Chickens are slaughtered, and hand processed on the farm under a USDA on-farm processing exemption, enabling direct sales to customers and wholesale. Their chickens can be found across 4 of the Hawaiian Islands and customers can visit the farm and see how their food is raised.

Emily was born and raised here and studied agriculture at UH Hilo. She is passionate about healthy food and sustainable agriculture. Yoric, who moved to Hawai'i from Tahiti in 2003, worked construction, built their family home in Mt. View and is in charge of daily operations. Emily does the sales and marketing and whatever else. Punachicks Farm expresses the Taaroa's experiences and passions. They are sure that once you taste farm-fresh chicken, you will not go back!

Emily met with Hawai'i SBDC as Punachicks started, has attended several Hawai'i SBDC workshops and continues to receive occasional business counsel.