

# An Edible Rainbow, Fresh from the Farm

**H**ow many servings of fruits and vegetables should we eat each day? Five? Nine? The nationwide, private-public partnership that introduced U.S. consumers to the concept of five-a-day has new, easy-to-remember advice: however many veggie and fruit portions you currently eat, more would be better. Fruits and Veggies—More Matters encourages us to make fruits and vegetables part of every eating occasion. Fresh, frozen, canned, dried, and pure-juice products all count toward this goal, and eating a variety of colors provides the broadest range of nutrients.

In Hawai'i, CTAHR faculty in the Cooperative Extension Service are the driving force behind Fruits and Veggies—More Matters, which has been integrated into the diverse consumer education efforts of the college's Nutrition Education for Wellness program. Through outreach to promote wholesome snacks for children in daycare, nourishing meals for seniors, smart shopping choices for households receiving food assistance, and healthy refreshments for workplace meetings, CTAHR is raising awareness of how tasty, nutritious, and affordable vegetables and fruits can be.

Here in the islands, the “all meals and all forms” message comes with a third recommendation: if you're in the market for fresh fruits and veggies, locally grown produce is your best choice. Fruits and Veggies—More Matters is partnering with Buy Fresh, Buy Local, a campaign through which CTAHR, the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture, media outlets, nonprofit organizations, and businesses are working to support local agriculture, conserve green farmland, and invest in our community. Fresh, ripe, local produce can offer superior nutrition and taste, and buying close to home protects the environment by limiting the fossil fuels burned to bring food to the table. From growers marketing their crops more effectively to shoppers putting more vegetables and fruits—including delicious, Island Fresh produce—in their carts, Buy Fresh, Buy Local and Fruits and Veggies—More Matters are helping our people stay healthy and our farmers stay in business.

*Three out of every four Hawai'i residents don't eat enough fruits and vegetables.*



Photo: Carissa Poon

*At the HMSA Island Fresh Festival, CTAHR extension personnel survey attendees about their vegetable and fruit consumption and tout the nutritional benefits of eating more servings daily.*



Photo: Dale Uno