

HAWAII NEWS

Waialua sunflower farm to hold open house

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Alika Napier, above, field operations manager with DuPont Pioneer, showed a tract of sunflower plants in a 20-acre Pioneer farm in Waialua on Monday.

DuPont Pioneer, which recently merged with the Dow Chemical Co., held a media tour Monday at its 2,000-acre Waialua property, one of Hawaii's largest farms.

The company is seeking to build more awareness about local farming, partnering with the University of Hawaii's Go Farm program, which trains farmers to become agricultural entrepreneurs. It is also opening its 20-acre



sunflower farm on the North Shore to the public for two weeks, beginning Wednesday.

The sunflower fields at 67-172 Farrington Highway in Waiialua will be open for free tours until Nov. 20. The tours run weekdays from noon to 2 p.m. and weekends from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Admission is free; the \$5 parking cost will be donated to Waiialua sports teams and schools.

More than 5,000 people are expected to visit the sunflower fields, which raise more than \$9,000 annually for the nonprofits.

Aside from sunflowers, the farm produces vegetables on an estimated 400 acres, including Asian cabbage, watermelon, honeydew melon, cantaloupe and zucchini. It uses 1,100 acres for corn crops. The food is grown by contractors Twin Bridge Farms, Mokuleia Farms and Aloun Farms.

Through social media, the sunflower fields have gained popularity over the past decade, before the farm opened to the public.

“People would just come to the fields and take their photos — essentially trespass — so what we did was bring the fields to a safer area ... in a much more controlled environment,” said Alike Napier, DuPont field operations manager. “Our vision is to bridge that gap between farmer and consumer. For us, the sunflower fields invite people to the farm because it entices a lot of people to come. Once they’re there, you can have the important conversation about supporting local agriculture and buying local products.”

For more information, go to pioneer.com/web/site/hawaii.

