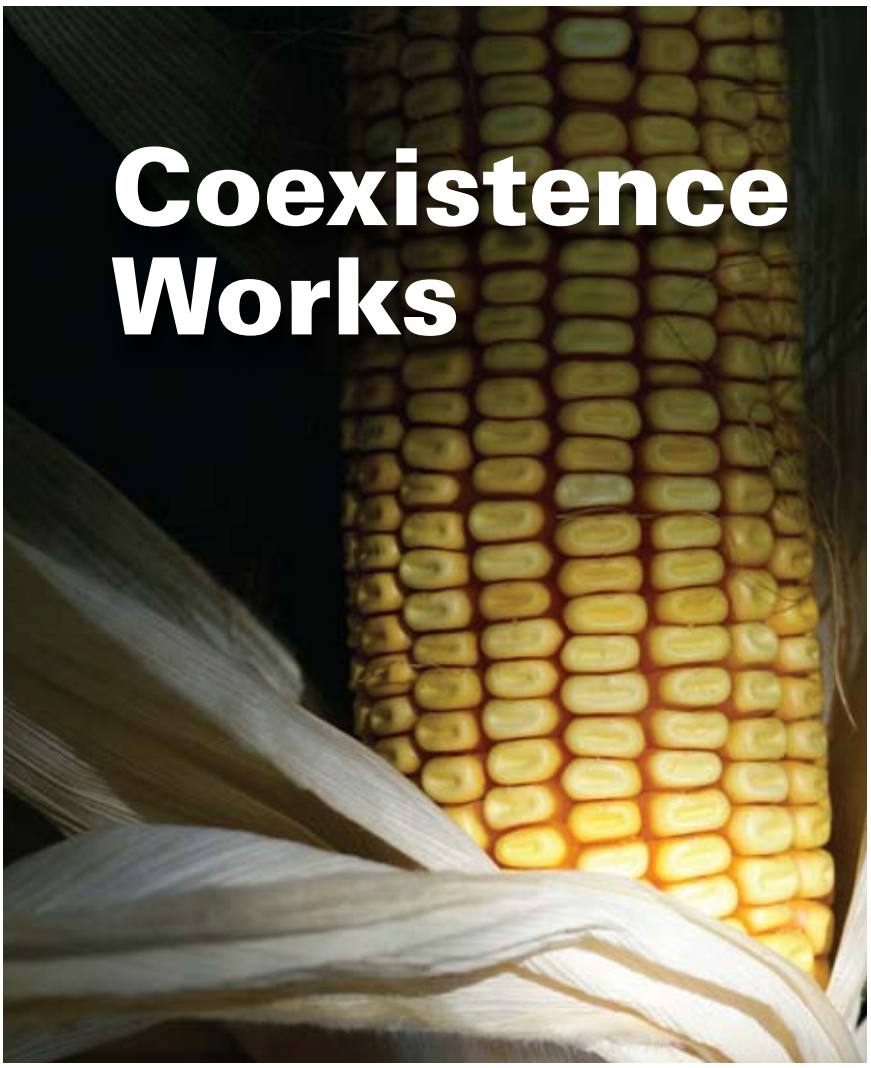
Coexistence Works



The essence of coexistence is being a good neighbor. Research tells us that coexistence can work and different methods of agriculture can successfully flourish within reasonable proximity of one another. The key to this success is an open channel of communication among Hawaii's growers. Hawaii is a gateway to worldwide agricultural production, and we can expand coexistence knowledge and best practices here to strengthen its use in other regions.

Ania Wieczorek
Associate Professor

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"In Hawaii, we have a perfect example of coexistence and that's the papaya industry. We have the same farmer growing both genetically modified and non-genetically modified papayas in one area on one crop."

Corn, the major biotech crop in Hawaii, cannot pollinate any of Hawaii's native or endangered species. Other genetically engineered crops grown in Hawaii include papaya, soybeans, wheat, and sunflowers. None of these plant species are able to pollinate any of Hawaii's native or endangered species.

Coexistence Works

Delan "Rusty" Perry
President

Volcano Isle Fruit Company

"Coexistence is about getting along with your neighbor. It's as simple as that."

- All forms of agriculture – conventional, organic and biotech – are important to meeting the increasing needs of the world's growing population. By embracing diverse methods of growing healthy crops, Hawaii farmers help to meet the needs of the domestic and international market.
- It's a common misconception that biotech plants can somehow cross-pollinate with indigenous species. Pollen movement and gene exchange between compatible plants is a well-understood and natural occurrence. In Hawaii, there are no compatible plants where biotech crops are grown.
- Biotech crops have flourished over the past decade. So have organic crops. Both are able to coexist and grow successfully. Most organic farmers raise a wide variety of fruits and vegetables not grown by biotech farmers, which means cross-pollination between organic and biotech crops is not even possible.
- For compatible plants, conventional, organic and biotech farmers can use a variety of well-established practices to preserve the identity of their crop, if desired. One method is to plant their fields far apart, or at different times of the year to avoid unwanted cross-pollination. Another is to cover the ears and tassels of corn plants with bags so the pollen cannot spread to other plants.
- On the Big Island, many farmers grow transgenic and non-transgenic papaya side by side without fear of cross-pollination. That's because the papaya seed that is planted will determine what kind of fruit is on the tree. If the seed that is planted is genetically engineered, the fruit will have the genes that are resistance to the papaya ring spot virus. If the seed that is planted is not genetically engineered, the fruit won't be either.

The Hawaii Crop Improvement Association (HCIA) is a nonprofit trade association representing the agricultural seed industry in Hawaii. Now the state's largest agricultural commodity, the seed industry contributes to the economic health and diversity of the islands by providing high quality jobs in rural communities, keeping important agricultural lands in agricultural use, and serving as responsible stewards of Hawaii's natural resources.

www.hciaonline.com

Hawaii Crop Improvement Association