



**A Message from Daniel E. Kugler**

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Finally, a vacation in Hawai`i! After nearly ten years of work with RETA-H, my family visited O`ahu, Hawai`i and Kaua`i, and I got to really enjoy the amenities, the climate, and off-the-beaten track places I have had the privilege to come to know. It was an odd and extremely rewarding experience that I had not expected.

Traveling along the Hamakua Coast of Hawai`i, we went to see Akaka Falls, visit botanical gardens and enjoy malasadas at Tex's Drive-In. But there is a trail of agricultural businesses (RETA-H projects) along the way...ginger, forage, kava, papaya, tea, bananas, honey, vanilla, dairy, and many more. On O`ahu, the Polynesian Cultural Center and snorkeling along the north shore were reflections from coffee, pineapple, wastewater treatment, intensive grazing, onions, melons and other RETA-H project businesses. Sunset dinner at the The Beach House restaurant by Lawai Beach on Kaua`i for our 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary was a jump away from small and large business enterprises for stevia, echinacea, sugar, taro, asparagus and coffee.

I had not expected to feel so close to the diversification of agriculture. While administering the program and visiting once or twice each year from Washington, D.C., I knew the RETA-H program was a foothold for change from the sugar's mono-crop agricultural economy, but I was inside the program working and helping to make it happen. As an informed traveler, I could see and feel the change, sense that it is sustainable, and applaud the outcomes.

In the December 2000 report on the RETA-H program, I said, "When all is said and done, there is one group of people that deserves the highest recognition. They know who they are. They saw opportunity, a glimpse of the future, and were willing to invest themselves and their resources to reach a dream. These are the entrepreneurs who came to RETA-H with ideas and left with new or expanded agricultural businesses..."

Now, I too have really seen them and their many kin. It is a remarkable testimony to the will and foresight of the people of Hawai`ii.

Thanks for a lifelong experience.

CSREES Mission - to advance knowledge for agriculture, the environment, human health and well-being, and communities.