Alternative waste management solutions for small-scale piggery operations: Educational outreach, demonstration and adoption for Pacific Island communities.

Glen K. Fukumoto and Luisa F. Castro, University of Hawaii at Manoa; Lawrence J. Duponcheel, Northern Marianas College; Leilanie Rechelluul, Palau Community College; Jina David, College of the Marshall Islands; Jackson Phillip, College of Micronesia-FSM; Mark Walker, University of Nevada-Reno; Brian Rippy, American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency; and Don Vargo, American Samoa Community College

Pacific island nations face many challenges in providing food sources for their residents. Increasing populations with high food demands, limited agricultural production, and geographic isolation mean these U.S. protectorates face significant food security risks. The most obvious of these risks for Pacific Island communities is the extremely low level of available food for local populations in an emergency. But perhaps even more damaging is the lack of available fresh meats and vegetables, or the high cost of these items when they are available. Expensive local produce and the ever-increasing cost of imported goods have pushed food costs above what many households can afford. This caused a major shift toward the consumption of more affordable processed and canned foods. As a result, healthy eating habits and overall health and well-being in Pacific Island communities have decreased over the last few decades, as levels of respiratory diseases, diabetes, heart disease, and cancer rise.

The United States employs federal programs in the Pacific, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture and land-grant co-operative Extension programs, that are charged with improving or promoting agriculture production and creating a shift in eating habits. This is a daunting task for many federal programs and technologies that were developed for mainland production. Furthermore, federal programs have high turnover rates of employees, and no clear venue for communication between agencies and community programs and programs, and continuing evaluation and improvements to the technologies, producers’ attitudes have shifted in their views of animal waste as a resource rather than a problem. Improvements to water quality in communities such as Samoa have been embraced and promoted in order to protect water systems and individuals’ self-reliance.

Combining natural elements. Dry carbon bedding, sloping pen floors, gravity, and natural hog behavior combine to stabilize and convert animal wastes into a soil amendment for use in cropping systems.

Closing the cycle. The integrated composting system is an important design element of the dry litter technology.

Out with the old and in with the new. Paradigms of long-established waste systems are changing from polluted waste and liability (fenced pit at left) to a simple and logical nutrient management system where nutrients are a resource and desirable asset of the piggery operation (covered unit on right).