

VOLCANO ISLAND HONEY COMPANY

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This is our 12th Annual Newsletter - November 2006

This year a conjunction of very unusual events has pushed us at VIHC to focus even more deeply on our environmental/business strategy. **Heavy rains** for three months in the winter caused the loss of 20% of our colonies, as well as 80% of our *Winter* and *Lehua* honey crops; thus our overall annual production this year is down by about 40%. A **three month late summer Kiawe bloom** coupled with **increased demand** caused us to run out of honey and operate with no income for 3 months. The 6.7 magnitude **earthquake** in October caused two honey storeroom shelves holding more than 1,000 cases of honey to collapse. **Fuel price** increases caused our shipping costs to the mainland to escalate. All these events in one season caused us reluctantly to **increase prices** to minimize our losses and keep our staff working. This chain of events is convincing us to deepen our dedication to act in environmentally and socially sensitive ways that might help sustain life on earth. VIHC is a business with “an Uncommon Philosophy” because we focus as much on perennial values as on the bottom line. In these times, it feels important to further deepen our abiding respect for the environment and people, encouraging others to do the same. (For more specifics of our goals and actions please visit our website.)

Puako Forest Project: I have teamed up with Neil Logan, an ethno-botanist, to educate about the value of the unique Kiawe (*prosopis pallida*) forest at Puako that produces our exquisite honey. We hope to show the developer that there are better uses for the 500 acres of unique and valuable forest than the planned golf course. At the Natural Products Expo in Anaheim, CA we presented a drink and a cake made from the healthy, protein rich Kiawe beans and our honey; we received a very positive response. Our goal is to acquire the forest and preserve it via an **agricultural, conservation easement**. We intend to create a demonstration project of **sustainable, multiuse, dry land forest management showcasing the healthful foods from this forest**. We want to protect this unique forest, the production of the honey, the aquifer that flows under the forest and the pristine reef where this fresh water flows out to the ocean.

Our 15KW diesel generator soon will generate most of our electricity from waste vegetable oil collected from local restaurants. Currently two of our employees use vegetable oil to run their vehicles, and Jerry is in the process of creating his own business to collect, refine and make available this environmentally friendly bio-fuel for local farmers.

Our Administration, Production and Sales Teams: In the office Candice is training Kimberly and Marcie who both joined us this year. Cameron helped in the office until Kimberly took over the phones and ordering. To help slow the economic strain of low production, Sunee returned to hands on work while still managing production. Doris took on more responsibility as Tammy cut back to pursue other interests. Donna and Kathy in Hawaii, Sarah in NYC and Frank on the West Coast once again skillfully responded to our decreased production, helping commercial customers understand our situation. Candice is doing an excellent job allocating our limited inventory to our commercial accounts.

Our Field Team: Jerry and Nicole worked with the bad weather to minimize our losses with help from Evan, our first real apprentice. Evan was a great help. He even created the beginning of a field data base for us before he left for his first year at Stanford. Stbon, my son-in-law, came back to help with harvesting. I too went back into the field this summer to help harvest.

My Family continues to grow. Shaina, my youngest, now has a son Hayden and a daughter Sierra born last April (I arrived a few hours after her birth). Kristin my oldest continues to teach and is well liked by parents, as well as, students. Her two sons, Kulan and Hokua really enjoyed visiting with their cousin Hayden at his house in California and swimming together in the pool. Candice and I continue to deepen our relationship; we even backpacked up to about 8,000 feet on Mauna Loa this year.

Tours of our honey farm continue to increase as more people express an interest in our sustainability philosophy. If you are planning a visit to the Big Island, call us to schedule an inspirational, educational tour of our Honey Farm. See how we achieve our delectable, “earthy elegance” in a jar.

Our Website has a new, much more user-friendly, online store, thanks to the focused effort of Marcie and Candice.

For this year’s Holiday Special and ordering deadlines please **see the enclosed Order Form**.

We truly appreciate and value you as a customer.

Again we say: In these difficult times in the world, when fear is running rampant, we still believe in peace.

Turning inward to find peace in our hearts may be the best way to find security and freedom from fear.

Kindness, tolerance and compassion cultivate the recognition that violence is not the way to peace.

♥ May this Holiday Season bring peace in your heart, in your family and in the world. ♥

Aloha,

Richard Spiegel and Ohana (Family)
Beekeepers & Gatherers of Fine Honey



A Taste of the Magic of Hawaii®