

Angela Barr  
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Book Media Review  
Professor Wertheimer  
LIS 615

MILLER, Danny (Writer, Producer & Director). *Na Kupu Mana'olana "Seeds of hope"*

[Videorecording]. Honolulu; Distributed by the Hawaii Rural Development Council, 2013. 1

DVD (86 min.). Special features: a 35-minute educator's version of the film for school use.

Available for sale at the film's website (<http://www.hawaiiirdc.org>) or by contacting the HRDC at Hawaii Rural Development Council, 711 Kapiolani Boulevard Suite 1430, Honolulu, HI 96813.

Licensed for school (\$10.00) or home use (\$10.00).

Farm to table. Sustainable. Organic. Try buy local! The food movement is part of today's social consciousness and nowhere is the discussion about food security more relevant than here in Hawaii. Residents of Hawaii import about 85% of our food and many worry that this dependency on mainland food supplies, with ever increasing production and shipping costs, is not sustainable. Danny Miller, supported by the Hawaii Rural Development Council, tells the story of food insecurity in the Hawaiian islands in his latest documentary, *Na Kupu Mana'olana/Seeds of Hope*. The film is written, produced, and directed by Miller, a Big Island film director whose credits include films *Turning the Canoe*, and *Changing Tides*. Miller has been producing documentaries and television content for over 25 years and his work has been seen nationally on PBS, A&E, Bravo, HBO, and Showtime.

*Na Kupu Mana'olana/Seeds of Hope* is a provocative glimpse into the food crisis that our islands are experiencing. Miller skillfully weaves a story of agriculture and land management in the Hawaiian islands from the ancient ahupua'a system, to the rise, fall, and withdrawal of sugar and pineapple plantations, to the rich history of ranching. The film highlights the present day

struggles of the islands' farmers, their inability to purchase or lease land, and their competition with seed companies that grow GMO crops for research. Miller attempts to give a balanced account of the issues by interviewing a Monsanto seed representative and a UH plant pathologist who researches and advocates for genetic engineering and genetic modification of food crops like papaya and taro (kalo). But the film's predominant message is the need to return to growing sustainable crops by native methods and being responsible stewards of our island lands. With its not-so-subtle digs at corporate and capitalist farming methods, one could comfortably place *Na Kupu Mana'olana/Seeds of Hope* in the same genre as food documentaries like *Food Inc.* or *The Future of Food*.

The full version of the film, with an 86 minute run time, is broken into 14 chapters, easily navigated by a menu page. The cinematography is simple but effective for communicating the film's content. The audio quality is good, although the copy of the film that I viewed, which had not been previously opened, contained a few skips. Many will recognize the music of Jack Johnson and Kapono Beamer, musicians and advocates for a sustainable Hawaii. The tone of the full cut version ranges from inspiring and hopeful, to alarming and cautionary and is probably only appropriate for adult viewers. While the message was provocative, I felt that the film's creators missed an opportunity to actually bring about meaningful change. In addition to encouraging us to educate our youth about farming, I would have appreciated contact information for volunteer opportunities or groups to join that might help advocate for a more sustainable food system.

The DVD also contains a 35-minute educator's version, geared towards younger school age children. This version of the film has a lighter tone, omitting certain segments such as Heptachlor crisis or the conflict with the GMO seed companies. In this version as well as the full

length version, viewers might recognize local farmers from island farms like Naked Cow Dairy, Ma'ō Farms, and Ho Farms as they discuss the challenges and rewards that accompany farming in Hawaii today. The educational cut is broken into 9 chapters covering topics like ahupua'a, plantations, paniolo, and school gardens. This version is short enough that it could be viewed in total or broken up into chapters, as classroom time permits. *Na Kupu Mana'olana/Seeds of Hope* would be an excellent addition to any Hawaiian school library, enhancing a Hawaiian education or school garden program. Alternatively, the film could supply some basic information for schools that may lack those programs. Based on personal communication with HRDC chair Alan Murakami, the film is licensed and intended for school library and curriculum use or for home use.