

# The Resilience Blueprint



LA FINCA DE  
HAMBERTO

La Finca De Hamberto  
Vieques, Puerto Rico

# Cultivating Resilience: La Finca de Hamberto's Vision for a Food-Secure Vieques

## I. Executive Summary

La Finca de Hamberto is cultivating a resilient future for Vieques, Puerto Rico, by addressing critical food insecurity through sustainable agriculture and farming. Vieques, a small island with a high poverty rate, faces extreme dependence on imported food, leading to high costs and unreliable supplies. La Finca's work tackles this by strengthening local food production, reducing waste, and promoting energy independence. Through initiatives like waste diversion, hoophouse expansion, and renewable energy projects, La Finca is building a more self-sufficient and environmentally healthy community. Support from donors, grants, and partners is crucial to expanding this vital mission and creating a model for sustainable rural development.

## **II. Introduction: The Problem & The Need**

Vieques, home to under 9,000 residents, faces significant challenges. Over 50% of the population lives below the federal poverty line, classifying the community as rural, persistently poor, and critically underserved. A major issue is food insecurity. Despite lower incomes, Vieques residents pay as much or more for fresh produce than mainland Americans. This is due to the island's extreme reliance on imports: 99% of Vieques' food comes from mainland Puerto Rico, which itself imports over 85% of its food. This fragile supply chain, dependent on a single cargo vessel, often results in nutritionally deficient, expired, or damaged goods. Beyond food, Vieques faces environmental challenges, including deforestation exacerbated by hurricanes and the legacy of US Navy munitions testing. Climate change, with worsening droughts, floods, rising sea levels, and warming temperatures, further threatens the island's agricultural viability.

## **III. Project Description: The Solution**

La Finca de Hamberto addresses these challenges through a multi-faceted approach:

- **Strengthening Local Food Production:** Increasing the quantity and quality of locally grown food to reduce dependence on imports.
- **Waste Reduction:** Implementing circular economy initiatives to minimize food waste and create valuable resources.
- **Sustainable Farming Practices:** Utilizing regenerative agriculture techniques to improve soil health, conserve water, and reduce environmental impact.
- **Renewable Energy:** Achieving energy independence to ensure a reliable and sustainable power supply for farm operations.

Key project components include:

- **Food Scrap Program:** Transforming food waste from restaurants and supermarkets into animal feed and compost.
- **Community Kitchen:** Processing farm-fresh and rescued food into nutritious meals for vulnerable populations.
- **Farmer Support:** Providing resources, training, and market access to other Puerto Rican farmers.
- **Workshops & Education:** Sharing expertise in sustainable farming methods with the community.

- **Silvopasture & Rotational Grazing:** Utilizing livestock to improve soil health and biodiversity.
- **Agrivoltaics:** Integrating solar panels with agriculture to generate clean energy and provide shade for animals and crops.
- **Biogas:** Capturing methane from organic waste to produce energy.
- **Hydrogen Power (Future):** Exploring the potential of hydrogen as a clean energy source.

#### IV. Innovation & Differentiation

La Finca's approach is unique in its holistic integration of sustainable practices, addressing food security, environmental restoration, and community empowerment simultaneously. The farm's circular economy model, combined with its focus on renewable energy and farmer support, creates a resilient and self-sustaining system. The agrivoltaics and biogas projects demonstrate innovative solutions to the challenges of climate change and energy dependence.

## **V. Project Management & Team Expertise**

La Finca de Hamberto operates under USDA programs for underserved and veteran farmers, demonstrating its commitment to equitable access and sustainable practices. The farm has a proven track record of successful grant management and project execution, including collaborations with local restaurants, community organizations, and academic institutions. The team possesses expertise in sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, and community development.

## **VI. Sustainability & Scalability**

La Finca's projects are designed for long-term sustainability. The focus on renewable energy and waste reduction minimizes reliance on external resources. The farmer support programs create a ripple effect, expanding the adoption of sustainable practices throughout the region. The farm's model can be replicated in other rural communities facing similar challenges.

## VII. Monitoring, Evaluation, & Learning (MEL)

La Finca tracks key metrics, including food production, waste diversion, energy generation, and community participation. Data is collected through farm records, surveys, and community feedback. Regular evaluations assess the effectiveness of projects and identify areas for improvement. Results are shared with stakeholders, including donors and partners.

## VIII. Budget Summary & Funding Request

La Finca seeks funding to expand its operations and enhance its impact. Specific needs include:

- **Infrastructure:** Shipping containers, fencing materials, a tractor, and food processing equipment.
- **Renewable Energy:** Investment in solar and agrivoltaics projects.
- **Livestock & Pasture Management:** Equipment for expanding pastures and implementing breeding programs.
- **Personnel Support:** Funding for dedicated staff to manage projects and maintain high standards.
- **Community Workshops:** Resources to organize and conduct training programs.

A detailed budget breakdown is available upon request.

## **IX. Conclusion**

La Finca de Hamberto offers a compelling solution to the urgent problem of food insecurity in Vieques. By supporting this project, donors can invest in a sustainable, resilient, and equitable future for the island community. La Finca's innovative approach, proven track record, and commitment to collaboration make it a worthy partner in building a healthier and more sustainable world.