

EAST HAWAII
AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT SKILLS PANEL
JANUARY 24, 2012

In order to re-establish agriculture as an essential component for the well-being of our island community, a capable and competent workforce will be required with the ability to fulfill the unique needs of this progressive agricultural industry.

Sectors:

1. Innovation and Sustainability

New technologies, ideas and innovation are critical components to the growth and expansion of this industry. Ecologically friendly and economically viable sustainability planning is equally vital to agriculture. Innovative support to traditional farming is also critical here.

- a. Farm Energy: Agriculture as Alternative Energy and Waste to Energy Initiatives
- b. Supportive finances and partnerships with banks, utility companies, etc.
- c. Non-Traditional Agriculture: diversification, value-added potential to crops.
Who can help?
- d. Feed and Fertility: options on “green” methods; making own fertilizers (Who can help?)
- e. Making Hawaii Island “food secure.” What will it take from each of us?

2. Regulatory Issues

There is a critical need to strike a balance between regulations for safety and consistency purposes vs. being unduly restrictive on individual farmers. The targeted and specific identification of regulatory issues need to be addressed and prioritized via strategic action steps (i.e., legislation, laws, ordinances, public awareness, etc.)

- a. Farm Safety Certification. What does it mean for farmers? How can it be achieved? What are the benefits for farmers? (suggested resources: Jim Hollyer, CTAHR; Russell Kokubun, DOA; Tane Datta, Adaptations)
- b. Dept. of Agriculture Leases. What do we need to do to ensure qualified farmers can access DOA leases? (suggested resources: Russell Kokubun, DOA; Lori Beach, Hamakua North Hilo Ag Co-op)
- c. Farm to School Program. How can farmers access our local school market? What do we need to have in place to satisfy procurement protocols. (suggested resources: Glenna Owens, DOE Procurement; Nancy Redfeather, Hawaii Island School Garden Network)

3. Education and Training

Education and training are vital components in the development and expansion of our future and existing workforce. Having a responsive workforce system that can readily address the needs of farmers and aspiring agricultural entrepreneurs is absolutely essential to sustain and grow this industry. Incumbent worker training, coordinated work-based modules, career exploration and development strategies are all key activities here.

- a. Center for Entrepreneurial Support in Agriculture. What are the primary areas for which this center needs to provide support to enable new and innovative

entrepreneurial development in the agricultural industry? Location? Who is willing to help?

- b. Long Term Educational Support. What programs are needed to enable the re growth of the agriculture industry and improved sustainable food security in Hawai`i? How can communication be improved among stakeholders (DOE UHH, UHM, existing farmers, future farmers, food distributors, community) to articulate what is presently offered and what is needed? Who is willing to help?
- c. Educational Extension Service. What services and training opportunities do farmers need from their extension service to best support the re growth of agricultural industry and improved opportunities for new farmers? How can CTAHR and CAFNRM pool their resources to best serve the famers? Who is willing to help?

4. Infrastructure and Marketing

Building and strengthening a comprehensive, responsive support system is fundamental to the vitality of this industry. A highly integrated communication network must effectively reach all farmers, policy-makers, buyers, distributors, consumers, etc. Marketing, as a key component to connect products to consumers, must be well coordinated and supported throughout our island community.

- a. (Re)building the Processing and Distribution Chain for Local Products. Job opportunities: food hubs, value-added processing, conglomerating, distribution. Cold Chain Infrastructure as leverage point. Packaging, packing, and value-added: dealing with regulations.
- b. Market Access: Local and Global. Networking, planning/collaborating for consistent supply and quality; price-setting and margin: accounting skills for agripreneurs; accessing global market information
- c. Product Branding: telling your story/standing by your product. Branding as value-added strategy for your farm; branding Hawai`i agricultural products: collaboration with hospitality industry; showcasing farmer stories: building the appeal of agriculture as a career.