Sustainable Agriculture Skill Panel Forum
January 24, 2012
Infrastructure & Marketing

Chair: Michelle Galimba
Facilitator: Lorraine Lunow-Luke

Discussion Outline:
I. Introductions: Why are we here?
II. Setting the Context Discussion:
   a. Panel Chair’s Overview
   b. What is the current state of communication between educational entities and the Agricultural industry on Agricultural infrastructure and marketing?
   c. What is the current state of labor and labor shortages affecting infrastructure and marketing?

III. Preferred Vision in 10-20 Years: Best Case Scenario
IV. Develop Priorities
   a. What are the opportunities or supporting forces that will move us closer to our best case scenario/vision?
   b. What are the barriers or restraints that hold us back from moving closer to our best case scenario/vision?

V. Outline Actions for Priorities (time permitting)

I. Introductions: Why are we here?
   • Be involved in dialog. Big Island to be catalyst to motivate farmers and help people.
   • Lava Zones 1 & 2 can’t get liability insurance. Need to help farmers get produce out and convert to year-round crops to develop ability to make a living farming.
   • Concerned about fair wages and qualified labor and being able to make a living.
   • Learn how to deal with labor problems; improve quality of Ag product.
   • How do we market our food? Grown to be sustainable.
   • Marketing, food safety facility, and technology shop.
   • Food sustainability; advocate natural farming.
   • Learning how to do organic and natural farming. What resources are available to help us?
   • Gain information.
   • Receive information; concerned for Hawaii’s environment (“sacred garden”); equal farm systems; infrastructure; languages and communication and promotion; international trade.
   • How to reach out to customers; hydroponic farming.
   • Enroll government’s support for Ag as an export.
   • Promote Ag in the state and educational programs. How can we collaborate? Labor issues. How to market our produce?
• I study trace minerals in soil which is part of infrastructure; water systems to support Ag into the future.
• Looking community by community to see where we farm, what we consume, and create a baseline report.
• Legislation issues; permitting; support for Ag bills.
• Keeping more cattle here (Big Island). Concerned about work force, need to encourage the next generation of farmers. Affordable water and the infrastructure to make water more affordable.
• County and state work with us to provide land and water.
• Useful models for cooperation in marketing and methods of production. Informing people what the options are.
• Education and youth have a poor image of farming. Encourage young to farm – change image.
• Learn about Ag industry as an option to share with military vets as a possible career option.
• To promote responding to Labor Department survey regarding wages and labor
• See more diversity and value-added farm products. More assistance to farmers. Support to Hawaiian Homesteads. Successes on the farm.
• Learn how to serve our farmer tenants and get more food into the local marketplace.
• Learn, listen, and support efforts to get local food processing centers.
• Thinking about range of jobs that support farmer throughout production process – think of the whole system.
• What is the best venue for marketing? Promoting Ag tourism. Assure farming is viable. Education is needed. Youth locked out of owning land.
• Designing supportive and affordable infrastructure to enable filling larger contracts. Affordable energy. Farmer training program.
• Transportation costs and certification for shipping. International markets to increase market share (China). Workforce is decreasing; the average age of farmers is increasing.
• Listen and participate. Participation in state and military procurement system important to long-term sustainability.
• Get younger workers in. (FFA, FHA)
• Manpower – programs to help develop workforce.
• Devise a process to put local kids into Ag and create more jobs through Ag.
• Educate youth; need for qualified employees; curriculum to include basic Ag and hands-on opportunities.

II. Setting the Context Discussion

Panel Chair’s Overview

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.


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.

What is the current state of communication between educational entities and the agricultural industry on agricultural infrastructure and marketing?

- Hawaii is still in its infancy; we need to focus on the mental edge.
- Gap exists between CTAHR’s research and graduate training and the farm.
- Lack of communication between education and Ag.
- Culinary schools are a model of connected education.
- Need programs that help farmers learn how to add value to their products.
- Lack of Hawaii graduates from higher education who stay and work in Ag here, i.e., no connection with education.
- Issue of youth not going into Ag because they can’t make money at it.
- Ag in DOE curriculum has gone through restructuring – focus is on other areas, so no exposure of youth to Ag.
- Want training for farm workers when they start their jobs, training in food safety and HAACP.
- Perception by youth that farming is too hard, they want to work in government.
- Knowledge and teaching at university level are not applicable on the farm; there’s a gap between book learning and applied [work].
- Ag labor is often immigrant. How do we communicate with and educate an immigrant force? They are not college educated.
- Immigrant laborers know farming, but they are marginalized because they don’t have a degree.

What is the current state of labor and labor shortages affecting infrastructure and marketing?

- Example: Successful immigrant farm family – child got marketing degree which helped them be successful.
• Not enough quarantine inspectors, has a big impact on farmers and economy due to more bugs and disease.
• How can Farm Bureau help support farmers?
• Liability insurance is an important support service to farmers, but can’t get it in Lava Zones 1 & 2. Youth could work on farms during their school breaks, etc., but they can’t without insurance.
• Not enough machinists and mechanics to repair farm equipment.
• Not enough farm laborers.
• Not enough technical people with knowledge of Hawaii Ag (for example: scientist couldn’t identify local weeds).
• WOOFERS program: provides imported laborers to work on organic farms – why not locals?
• Housing is too expensive, can’t get housing for workers.
• Regulations don’t allow farmers to live on leased land.

III. Preferred Vision in 10-20 Years: Best Case Scenario

10-20 years from now, from a workforce development perspective, what is the best case scenario for assuring a workforce engaged in agriculture infrastructure and marketing?

• Pool of laborers (e.g. fruit pickers) that are covered for liability insurance to draw from.
• H1 visas are readily available for our needs.
• Diverse multi-channeled distribution and processing systems.
• CTAHR is proactive in farming outreach.
• Food Safety Certification Certificate program exists.
• A truly one-stop shop for skilled labor exists.
• Science and technology will be a big part of farming (robots, high tech computers); new ways to farm.
• Accessible health insurance for farmers and workers.
• Dedicated elementary, middle school, and high school Ag programs with hands-on mentoring and internship components.
• Vocational education available – people will be able to graduate from trade and tech programs and be qualified to get a job.
• Ag is viable and attracts educated people (in science and technology, etc.).
• Scholarships are offered. Ag education is more affordable and includes a service component on the farm.
• Mentorship program with business people provides input to help farmers grow their businesses.
• Workforce Development office is partnered with business on an internship program.
• On-the-job training for students in trade programs.
• More overarching, statewide, collaborative programs that don’t duplicate functions.
• Student loan support for those who are interested in Ag to go to college, e.g., loans forgiven when they work in the field.
• Exports/Imports; good flow of currency; solid Chamber of Commerce.
IV. Develop Priorities

What are the **opportunities or supporting forces** that will move us closer to our **best case scenario/vision**?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority 1: Collaborative Opportunities for Value-Added Products, Distribution and Marketing (C) (18 votes)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for collaborative venture in processing facility.</td>
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<td>Get college involved in marketing to help change image. Use successful examples.</td>
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<td>Great resource on the Big Island is its artists and the good Art Department at UH. Could be part of a collaborative marketing effort.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good models exist, for example: cooperatives manage output and costs, “Adaptations” project.</td>
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<td>Produce list sent to hotels by Adaptations project.</td>
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<td>Grow by developing contracts for example with local chefs.</td>
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<td>“Process modeling” to educate about who is real customer.</td>
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<td>Develop a distribution cooperative to share costs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversify products to create stability and buffer against global market changes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Produce packaging locally.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop programs that help farmers learn how to add value to their products.</td>
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What are the **barriers or restraints** that hold us back from moving closer to our **best case scenario/vision**?

- Costly to create a certified kitchen/processing facility near production.
- Global markets impact local markets.
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**Priority 2: Quality of Education: Producing Skilled Workers (B2)**  
(12 votes)

- Meet the youth on social media (e.g., points on Farmville for working on local farm).
- Help youth understand what is farming – science, marketing, etc.
- Develop food safety training programs for workers when they start work.
- How do we meet our youth where they are?
- Students far removed from where things come from.
- Not enough machinists and mechanics to repair farm equipment.
- Not enough technical people with knowledge of Hawaii Ag (e.g., technician could not identify local weeds).
- Lack of Hawaii graduates from higher education who stay and work in Ag here.
- Youth don’t go into Ag because they can’t make money at it.
- Ag in DOE has gone through restructuring; focus is on other areas, so no exposure of youth to Ag.
- Perception by youth that farming is too hard, they’d rather work in government.

**Priority 3: Regulations (H)**  
(11 votes)

- Do more to protect Ag land.
- Ag does currently pay lower taxes than others.
- Make the tax rate more fair to farmer who is making living off of land.
- Consider percent of land that is used for Ag when setting tax rate.
- Good Ag land lost – gentlemen farms, Aloun Farms developing housing, etc.
- Tax barriers, inequities, disincentives for Ag
- Counties haven’t identified what are important Ag lands
- Disconnect between zoning and usage
- Consider that different growing times affect productivity.
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</table>
| **Priority 4: Government and Other Support Services (E)**  
(10 votes) |  |
| • Partner on transportation.  
• Cooperative marketing for small farmers with CTAHR’s help.  
• Decrease costs of inputs by producing them locally.  
• Provide support for local farmers and producers.  
• Farm Bureau support. | • Barriers to marketing include many small individual farmers who may not have marketing background.  
• High cost of inputs.  
• Expense to ship – transportation costs.  
• Not enough Quarantine people. |

**Priority 5: Outreach & Information Gap between Education and Ag (B1)**  
(9 votes)

| • Gap exits between CTAHR’s research and graduate training and the farm.  
• Lack of communication between education and Ag.  
• Knowledge/teaching at university level is not applicable on the farm – gap between book learning and applied. |  |

**Priority 6: Farm Labor Pool (G)**  
(3 votes)

| • 2 companies in Waimea source Laborers.  
• WOOFERS provides imported labor on organic farms, could provide local labor, too. | • Not enough farm laborers.  
• Housing too expensive, can’t get housing for workers.  
• Regulations prevent from living on leased land. |

**Other Clusters (1 Vote Each)**

- Insurance Availability
- Immigrant Labor and Communication
- Focus on Mental Edge
V. Outline Actions for Priorities

1. Collaborative Opportunities for Value-Added Products, Distribution and Marketing
   - Look at model in Taos, NM: Food center with certified kitchen, incubator, mobile slaughter house, etc.
   - Connecting could be done with an interactive website – an “Ag Dating Service”; for example, connecting farmers with graphic designers.
   - Develop collaborations between farmer, food science professionals, marketing professionals, and distributors.
   - Share options on how to add value to product.
   - Develop business connections with other countries to create export opportunities.
   - Publish a “Hawaii Guide to Value-Added Products” for farmers -- how-to, what are regulations and requirements, etc.

2. Quality of Education: Producing Skilled Workers & the Next Generation
   - Make sure Ag is one of the DOE career tracks. Ag is not just farming.
   - More focus on Ag specific courses – not lumped in with general natural resources. Need targeted funding.
   - Include more hands-on, student service learning
   - Develop a cluster around Ag education: national labs, research universities, and applied professionals should collaborate to determine the educational process and type of worker needed. What are you educating them for?
   - Increase the conversation – create a “critical mass” of information around Ag education for public and government. “Glamorize” it, give it “sex appeal.”
   - Bring together different extension classes in one place for farmers (CAS model).
   - Publish a farm manual that compiles information from buyers on what they want.
   - Use new technology tools to educate youth.
   - Develop a traveling exhibit to go around to schools: each exhibit with a different component of Ag – “Wide, Wide World of Hawaii Ag.”