

**Sustainable Agriculture Skill Panel Forum**  
**May 11, 2012**  
**Business Development**

**Chair:** Wayne Katayama

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**Recorder:** Stanford Fichtman

**Discussion Outline:**

- I. Introductions: Why are we here?
  - II. Setting the Context Discussion:
    - a. What is the current state of communication between educational entities and the agricultural industry on business development?
    - b. What is the current state of labor and labor shortages affecting business development?
  - 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)
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**I. Introductions: Why are we here?**

- Comments were not recorded

**II. Setting the Context Discussion**

***What is the current state of communication between educational entities and the agricultural industry on business development?***

- Make the Agriculture industry stronger
- Providing of resources to farmers
- Business survival tools
- Regulatory support
- Better know the business needs of farmers
- Better learn about export to the mainland
- Improving business plans
- Involve youth in business and agriculture
- Knowing other points of view
- Helping agriculture thrive

- Needs of the workforce – UHCTAHR
- Insight on workforce training – DLIR WDD
- Promotion of the “Kauai” brand in agriculture
- Change business concept regarding agriculture
- Introduce USDOL resources to Kauai farmers – USDOL
- Identifying delivery strategies
- Identify issues and solutions
- How to keep the sugar business thriving
- Find ways to partner with other agencies
- Plan of action on distribution for farmers – USDA
- Network with Hawaii Judiciary and correctional industries
- Gain resources and knowledge
- Desire to hear success stories
- Marketing effort needs to target youth
- Very little communication overall
- Kauai food consortium – beginning initiative (Kauai Community College)
- No real outreach to/from large landowners for resources
- Lack of awareness of job opportunities
- Lots of resources available, internet, etc.; individuals need to be taught and use
- Government has been responsive to needs of farmers.
- Lack of approaching landowners
- Need for internship programs and business planning
- Need to start dialogue with landowners
- Give Ag people options
- Need more input from farming community
- Difficult to identify prospective candidates, and organizations do not communicate opportunities to members
- Get agencies together with educators to provide financial support
- Trade associations provide support to farmers; farmers need to belong
- Older generation focuses on getting work done
- Advisory groups to help develop curriculum
- Information not getting to students, teachers and counselors – they are not communicating
- Needed training and skills not available (tractor driving, etc.)
- Communication is getting better; more resources are made available, internships, and follow up is happening
- Training needs to be made available for times that are optimal for farmers
- Pipeline – needs to be well defined
- Money is available – interest in training, though, is lacking
- Change of perceptions is needed for agriculture; there are generational and age issues

### ***What is the current state of labor and labor shortages affecting business development?***

- Dire need
- Lack of interest
- Leaving out profitability when talking about sustainability
- Work with temp agencies to find people to work
- Work ethic has changed; people do not want to work hard, their values are different, therefore the workforce has changed, too – values/ethics/drugs
- How to make it profitable and follow laws
- Is enforcement going on?
- A clearinghouse is needed for employers and people looking for jobs
- One-on-one working with farmers to identify needs and what they want to do, marketing included
- What is the vision? How is the process of instilling entrepreneurial experience accomplished?
- Entitlement attitudes among the young people entering the workforce is an issue
- There is a shortage of technical and management promotion
- Many want to work “under the radar” due to licensing and work comp insurance, etc.; enforcement is needed
- Strides are being made – expansion of S.T.E.M. (Science Technology Education and Math) curriculum, but return on work for new farmers is slow
- No support of farmers to be seen as role models for the next generation to encourage them to get into farming
- Marketing to grow agriculture workforce
- In some aspects, there are no jobs in agriculture or only part-time work; there are no permanent jobs in agriculture
- Lack of land, expensive to acquire land; we need to create programs like ag-parks for more to get involved in agriculture
- No clear career path for those interested in agriculture, and no success stories about how to get there
- Identify what CTAHR’s vision and mission is
- What type of training is going on?
- Need core pool of people to identify:
  - Tech
  - Soft Skills
  - Cultural work value
- Farming requires a big investment; people need a long lease or ownership
- We need an ag-park on Kauai with goals and 20+ year lease availability
- Need farmer incentive plan to provide:
  - Land
  - Labor and tech support
  - Ways to get product to market

- Coordinate resources that are currently in place and bring back communication – revisit and renew efforts.
- Danger of government planning without knowledge of the community and individual needs of farmers
- Need training and on-on-one support specific to actual needs of individual farmers

### 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 robust business development in agriculture?***

- Coordination of efforts to feed everyone on island in 10-20 years
- Paradigm shift – buy local food only; food seasonality needs to be recognized by consumers; don't buy or import non-seasonal foods
- System of teaching entrepreneurial skills for farmers
- Well integrated system to fulfill the needs of small and large producers through coordination between education, government and the private sector
- Hawaii grows and consumes 85% of what we grow
- Research business development; research has been done on agriculture opportunities that will be successful
- Have those in the pipeline believe that agriculture will provide jobs, rewarding careers , and is stimulating and profitable
- Sustainability, profitability, import replacement
- Long term leases or land ownership of land
- Land to pass on from generation to generation.

### IV. Develop Priorities

#### INITIAL LIST OF PRIORITIES

- 1. Sustainability, profitability, import replacement (13 votes)**
- 2. Develop strong export market and local brand (treatment support) (11 votes)**
- 3. Long term affordable land (10 Votes)**
- 4. Effective and timely training of farmers (10 votes)**
5. Everyone on island eats locally grown; 85% of what we eat is local (8 Votes)
6. Integrated/centralized system to meet producers needs (8 Votes)
7. Those in pipeline believe agriculture = jobs, careers, stimulating and profitable (8 votes)
8. Research done on agriculture operations that will be successful (4 votes)
9. Laws are updated to meet needs and are easy to follow (4 votes)
10. Buy local, especially large corporations (3 Votes)

Upon the vote the group decided to address the top 4.

**“Sustainability, Profitability, and Import Replacement” (SPIR)** is a top priority for success in business development – i.e., people need to be trained in these areas for successful business development in agriculture. Although SPIR was the top rated all the priorities, the group deferred the topic because it was way too broad to cover in the hour we had to develop doable actions. A very small minority of the participants in the room wanted to keep it as a top priority; we guaranteed the group that Wayne, the panel chair, would report at the Plenary Session that SPIR was highly rated, but that we moved on to items that were more achievable given our time constraints. **The other three top priorities were analyzed using the opportunities/barriers format.**

<i>What are the <b>opportunities or supporting forces</b> that will move us closer to our best case scenario/vision?</i>	<i>What are the <b>barriers or restraints</b> that hold us back from moving closer to our best case scenario/vision?</i>
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**Priority 1: DEVELOP STRONG EXPORT MARKET OPPORTUNITIES  
(11 votes)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kauai made/Kauai grown local brand development</li> <li>• Hawaii already has a strong brand overseas</li> <li>• Hawaiian culture has strong sustainability concept to work off of</li> <li>• Internet/niche marketing of Hawaii brand</li> <li>• Ag-tourism</li> <li>• Advertising to tourists using current advertising budget</li> <li>• Current farmers markets</li> <li>• Develop more agriculture-related businesses</li> <li>• Niche marketing of Hawaii brand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reverse sustainability</li> <li>• Regulatory hurdles</li> <li>• High average age of farmers</li> <li>• Attitudinal barriers</li> <li>• Consistency of supply</li> <li>• Foreign importer rejections</li> <li>• Lack of training resources for marketing</li> <li>• High cost of transport</li> <li>• Production costs</li> <li>• Quality control issues</li> <li>• Budget cuts for DOA inspectors</li> <li>• Focus on workforce development</li> </ul>
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**Priority 2: TIMELY TRAINING  
(10 votes)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kauai Community College/UHCTAHR/land at colleges for use</li> <li>• Off-campus training at farms</li> <li>• One-on-one consulting training</li> <li>• Putting students with farmers</li> <li>• YouTube and Ho’ike</li> <li>• Virtual business enterprise training and programs at high school level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial cost to take agriculture training</li> <li>• Lack of central clearinghouse of information</li> <li>• Liability</li> <li>• Lack of land</li> <li>• Lack of structured ladder training in agriculture</li> <li>• Basic reading and writing skills</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not enough time from farmers</li> <li>• Government agencies have lack of training needs awareness</li> <li>• Demands of production overwhelm management</li> <li>• Lack of young farmers</li> <li>• Language</li> </ul>
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**Priority 3: LONG TERM/AFFORDABLE LAND  
(10 votes)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedication of important agriculture lands (IAL)</li> <li>• DOA lands available for farming and ranching (ADC)</li> <li>• Large landowners open to long term ag leases</li> <li>• Underutilized water systems</li> <li>• FSA programs to purchase land</li> <li>• Rooftop farming</li> <li>• Aquaponics</li> <li>• New farming systems available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ADC unresponsive and political</li> <li>• “Long term” is questionable</li> <li>• Land leased under false pretenses</li> <li>• Price of land</li> <li>• Failing water systems</li> <li>• Agriculture is not considered the best use of land</li> <li>• Ban on housing on agricultural lands</li> <li>• Agriculture theft and vandalism</li> <li>• Affordable agricultural worker housing</li> <li>• Land classification for agriculture is “not highest and best use”</li> </ul>
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**V. Outline Actions for Priorities**

**Priority 1: Strong Export Market**

- Study on what export market to get into, and skills needed, and tying it all together
- Develop expertise in processing technologies
- Commercial kitchen technologies
- Encourage farmers to become part of commodity groups
  - Create list and encourage membership
- Internet, polycomm, and online training for e-commerce
- Hire a third-party marketing firm to create buzz about Kauai agriculture
- Create a value-added product for export, like rainbow papaya
- Request the Hawaii Export Council to provide training on Kauai
- Develop legal resources for farmers
- Develop agriculture marketing training and expertise, and professional sales skills (including cultural considerations)
- Create for farmers:

- Apprenticeship program
- Internship program
- Mentorship program
- Have an annual workforce development conference on Kauai to help address farming and their needs
- Develop treatment facilities to market and export crops

**Priority 2: Timely Training**

- Create a task force to develop continuous dialogue between education and industry
- Create wiki page of frequently asked questions and best practices
- Work with large landowners or incubation training to provide more support to programs
- Create certificate programs based out of Kauai Community College, Workforce Development Council, Dept. of Labor & Industrial Relations, Dept. of Agriculture, Dept. of Education, Farm Bureau, employers, commodity groups, Small Business Development Council, trade associations, County, Kauai Economic Development Bureau, Kauai Products Council, etc.
- Bring training to the farmers
  - This will allow the evaluation of needs
  - And match needs with effective training
- Small grant monies for practicum training (software/marketing)
- Create an advisory group; direct Kauai Community College to initiate an agricultural career certificate program
- Continue an agricultural business plan competition
- Hui different agriculture processors to fund training opportunities
- Have a business development group identify agricultural initiatives and opportunities, and to anticipate what is happening in the industry
- Have an agricultural “evangelist” to high schools to talk about how awesome agriculture is and to point the kids in the right direction.
- Create awareness for central information and referral services (CTAHR)
- Make training available in shorter formats to fit farmers’ available time
- Survey farmers for training needs
- Apprenticeship, internship and mentorship programs (including technical and marketing)