

Sustainable Agriculture Skill Panel Forum
March 6, 2012
Education & Training

Chair: Marcy Montgomery

Facilitator: Hazel Beck

Recorders: Rae Nakamura & Ruth Caldwell

Attendees:

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|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Tracy Armillei | 8. Nem Lau |
| 2. Colehour Bondera | 9. Marcie Montgomery (Chairperson) |
| 3. Nina Enomoto | 10. Melonie Ogata |
| 4. Mariana Garcia | 11. Nancy Redfeather |
| 5. Bert Kanoa | 12. Neil Sims |
| 6. Andrea Kawabata | 13. Greg Smith |
| 7. Marianna Larned | 14. Chris Wada |

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 education and training?
- b. What is the current state of labor and labor shortages affecting education and training?

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

I. Introductions: Why are we here?

- Listening to build programs
- Growing resources and the next generation of farmers
- Locally-trained employees instead of hiring from mainland
- Listen to farmers to help with getting them information on resources
- Learn opportunities to become a better farmer
- Tell people about my program
- Work together to make Kona a better place for agriculture
- Address employment, education and government issues
- Business consulting services
- Learn from others

- Connect with farmers to help students gain hands-on experience
- Listen and learn about industry concerns
- Learn what's currently happening with ag in schools
- Discover types of Adult Education leading to ag jobs
- Gain information to help build CTE pathways
- Educating farmers and public about sustainability
- Discover resources available for students

II. Setting the Context Discussion:

What is the current state of communication between educational entities and the agricultural industry on education and training?

- Minimal dialogue and communication between agencies
 - Lack of info for farms from government agencies
 - Disconnect between grocers and food purchasers for local products
 - Lack of marketing for local products
- Limited funding and marketing for workshops with the extension service
- Hands-on working farms with real communication
- Diversity of topics - ex. Pruning
- Government agencies need to help more with small farms
- Trying to teach kids where food comes from - sustainability
- Focus on food self-reliance but no support for programs; maybe no communication yet
- Creating a stage at this panel; maybe this could become a quarterly forum with an island-based planning commission
- UH and State lack communication with aquaculture
- Pathway Advisory Council of educators and industry exists for CTE and similar council for community colleges
- Local ag wisdom exists but there is a lack of knowledge of current resources
- Not enough hands-on training; to create local farmers we need local small farms to teach local people instead of classrooms
- Need more local "WWOOFers" (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) instead of so many mainland and foreign ones
- Many meetings like this have occurred over the past few decades, but this is the first where all the needed entities are at the table for the discussion
- There is a new government vision toward ag sustainability, but we're still lacking the communication needed for success
- No Child Left Behind Act has hindered ag education in schools. Now we need more support for hands-on career and technical education instead
- Vocational arts programs are lacking compared to the past when ag was physically taught and followed by classroom training
- UH Manoa has dropped their young farmer training program (so we won't

- have young farmers until UH puts out what farmers need)
- Small successes have occurred such as a National Small Farmer Lobbyist speaking to a local school because of a student finding them for Mentoring Day
 - Moving toward teaching ag at younger age but still lacking a continual vein or pathway from K-12+
 - Natural Resource CTE Pathway teaching force is decreasing
 - Focus moving away from CTE towards STEM instead
 - Lacking hands-on Math and Science training in ag field in schools
 - Lack of clarity on farming education
 - Lack of cross-pollination of ideas between East and West Hawaii
 - No required service learning at DOE, which has been successful at other schools nationwide
 - Image problem: “Farmers don’t make money”
 - Youth don’t want to wake up early and be sweaty first thing in the morning to take ag classes
 - Youth don’t like the hard physical labor
 - Need to quit saying “farmers don’t make money” because farming is a business and there is money to be made
 - Lots of passion
 - Dynamics are changing
 - Including more kids with different visions
 - Need a focused, parallel vision to move forward
 - Negative image about farming
 - Educators don’t support farming as a career path (i.e. “If you don’t learn this concept, you’ll have to be a farmer.”)
 - UH and Community Colleges are where most get their fundamental skills
 - May not be enough land for farming
 - Need a standard definition for farming
 - Lack of communication between farmers and DOE teachers
 - Lack of communication in what kind of training there needs to be (see successful models)

What is the current state of labor and labor shortages affecting education and training?

- The education seat is in Hilo, but most farms are island-wide so it’s difficult for college students to learn and work to get experience at the same time
- Farmers can’t live on wages due to high cost of living
- Disconnect between those who will take ag jobs and farmers who can train them
- Lack of local stores, like “Trader Joe’s”, to sell local produce and value-added products

- Lack of marketing for local produce and value-added products
- Low demand for local products
- Cheaper to sell products to mainland for processing/packaging and have shipped back here than it is to process locally because our state lacks processing technology
- Few local “WWOOFers”
- Lack of training funds for local farmers
- Lack of reaching out to the people to help farmers and teaching people how to farm
- Local farmers not able to sell to many restaurants here (limited)
- Poor market for local products. If products brought in enough money then farmers could pay for more labor and make more products to lower the cost of local products.
- High cost of processing local products needs to be reduced (like processing beef) or else must keep shipping to mainland

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 vibrant education and training for the agriculture workforce?

- Funds and land are accessible to farms
- Training available on taxes and business aspects of farming
- More small-scale farm schools around island with teachers for 1-year programs
- Farm-to-school program in state
- Institutional buy-in
- “Food HUB” on-line site connecting labor, farmers, chefs, retail, etc.
- Community connected with CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture)
- Established vision for youth that shows bigger picture of the island’s attributes
- The island becomes, and is marketed as, a world-wide model for ag sustainability
- Streamlined bureaucracy (i.e., schools can eat food grown locally and in school gardens)
- More people eating locally will cause financial jump to make growing local food sustainable and profitable
- Hawaii has created a new market for local products instead of trying to grow products often marketed globally that compete with global products (i.e., grow and market uses for taro rather than trying to grow iceberg lettuce in Hawaii which is already grown many other places)
- There is a place to market products and funding for shared certified kitchens
- On-line web-based software technology that maps products and trading harvest available on island and can locate laborers and markets
- On-line classroom can reach people from all over but targets locals

- Certified kitchen allows farmers to sell their value-added products anywhere
- Coordinated ag pathway from K-16
- Institutional buy-in with streamlined bureaucracy
- Young farmer training programs exist for new farmers
- Using soil from compost
- Sharing local resources through an online website
- People are educated about defined green initiatives
- Effective public transportation exists
- Youth have vision and see the unified ag picture
- Island marketed for sustainability
- People change their diet and lives to be able to eat and support local food
- Community colleges and NELHA work together to become a world leader in aquaculture
- Teacher training coordinated throughout the island
- Ag research is promoted and supported
- 50% of all food grown in Hawaii
- Community support and volunteers to help with Natural Resource pathways teachers
- More designated ag land
- More education for government entities and other agencies
- Resources are accessible so more farmers know legitimate ways to farm and sell products
- Ag curriculum has been redone to introduce Science, Technology and Math
- Marketing and processing co-ops are located throughout island
- Consumers are educated

IV. Develop Priorities

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

Future Farmers (8 votes)

- Tap into CTE pathways for students in high school to do community projects with farmers
- Form student/farmer collaborations
- Do a needs assessment with farmers on which age group small farms want to work with and ask students what type of ag they want to learn about so students can be more involved in choosing their own path and being involved in their own education
- Gain teacher buy-in and support
- Push community service ag projects at a younger age
- Schools should grow their own food

- Teachers need ag education and professional development (i.e., for on-campus gardens, ag programs, etc.)
- Find ways to incentivize ag to youth and incentivize farmers training youth
- Don't reinvent the wheel. Find current schools with great consumer learning programs and replicate it in other areas (i.e., recycling, gardening programs, etc.)
- Offer youth paid internships and incentivize mentoring for farmers
- We should view the transition from No Child Left Behind to Race to the Top as a way to engage students in real hands-on problem solving projects

Community Collaboration (8 votes)

- International marketplace also lets farmers use equipment
- Working with different parts of the community to collaborate
- Need to identify who the local farm leaders are and find ways to get them more active and plug them in
- Find ways to unite community segments (like through one-on-one appointments with farmers at their farm or with clusters of farmers in a community to discuss resources with local community groups)

Funding and Finance (7 votes)

- Lau Lima Center is the State Rural Co-op Center and can help folks develop their own co-op, and it also has a full-time business person and grant writer to help farmers that should be accessed more by farmers
- Re-vamp certified kitchens that once operated (there's grant money available for this now)
- Fund field trips and hands-on experience resource materials for DOE students
- Market Pahala's ag land to get farmers with capital to locate there (FSA has funds for new farmer loans like this)
- Help new farmers get funding and resources to be successful (like funding through USDA)

Farm Business Development (4 votes)

- Mobile certified kitchens
- Creating contractual agreements (Olsen Trust in the Pahala area)
- Local immigrant farmer education (by CTAHR) while reducing risks for farmers; integrating and creating continuity
- Training in business development – how to run a successful business
- Offer training on greening their business and transitioning to organic

Consumer Awareness (3 votes)

- Farm Aid Hawai'i concert in Hawaii to promote small farming and educate public about sustainability, etc., as well as to raise money for ag issues (invite Willie Nelson, Santana, Jack Johnson, etc.) and market this as a concert festival with music, booths, hands-on educational activities, media, etc.
- Think of students as part of consumer education. (ex. A young student grew broccoli in a school garden and this made the youth ask mom to begin buying broccoli at the grocery store. School gardens encourage healthy eating habits and an idea of where food comes from)
- Could educate the consumer so that in 20 years 50% of food in Hawaii is local
- Ke'ola magazine is a publication doing great things for sustainability that could help with educational awareness
- Students need to be exposed early so we must find what they want to learn and educate teachers
- Leverage those that are doing a school garden project

Technology (supporting ag) (3 votes)

- Online database should include community-based forums with a Craigslist-like model
- Students could help farmers with tech and marketing in a mutual learning exchange
- County Research & Development supporting on-line web-based portal
- Benchmark existing portals

What are the barriers or restraints that hold us back from moving closer to our best case scenario/vision?

- Difficult to keep a certified kitchen open
- No one currently to manage the discussed web portal and funds
- Challenge with lack of technology on-island
- Huge percent of current farmers are not in the “tech” age
- Potential farmers unable to lease the land (difficult to get funding to get the land to farmers)

V. Outline Actions for Priorities

1. Future Farmers

- Integrate and support school gardens and encourage sustainability in school curriculum from Early Childhood/K-12 education
- Tie in daily DOE curriculum to include agriculture, aquaculture and ranching

- Fund a 6-month cycle internship for local future farmers
- Promote mentoring and young farmer training programs
- Shift change in attitude to “You CAN make a living as a farmer in Hawaii” and “Making a Difference” and “It’s a lifestyle”
- Have workshops for mature farmers like “Master Gardener to Farmer” or “Managing a Profitable Farm”
- Replicate creative ideas like at Hana High School where interns get \$7/hr pay and \$4/hr worth of produce for interning

2. Community Collaboration

- Identify existing leaders in farming cultural groups and encourage them to be a gateway for community collaboration
- Find funding for certified kitchens to launch/re-launch to expand value-added product lines of local farmers
- Create and maintain web-portal for farmers, laborers, consumers, restaurants and retail, etc., to connect
- Encourage collaboration between local farmers and restaurants/chefs (i.e., producers and buyers)
- Increase small farmer co-ops where farmers collaborate to meet the needs of local businesses
- Create local Hawaii branding and/or local farm branding (i.e., insignias on doors of restaurants that buy that farm’s produce such as “We Support the Following Local Farms”
- Collaborate to create an annual Farm Aid Hawaii concert with a website to promote small farming and educate the public about sustainability, etc, as well as to raise money for ag issues (invite Willie Nelson, Santana, Jack Johnson, etc.) and market this as a concert festival with music, booths, hands-on educational activities, media, etc.
- Hold regular County Ag Forums (monthly or quarterly) to keep conversation going
- Have a directory of local produce buying businesses and have volunteers with signs identifying businesses
- Collaborate to get more local people buying local food instead of mainly tourists. (i.e., ensure food stamps are accepted at farmer’s markets)
- Encourage consumer awareness

3. Funding and Finance

- Connect the government’s vision with state funding for Ag programs
- Develop a local brand program
- Fund effective public transportation
- Properly staff government ag-related agencies
- Fund and re-vamp commercial kitchens
- Ease access to capital for farmers

- Fund field trips and hands-on resources in DOE
- Department of Agriculture should develop a staff position for writing grants for ag industry and farmers to increase federal funds flowing into the state for ag development
- Hire state government staff to assist with the “Fresh Fruit and Vegetables” USDA grant money implementation to avoid wasting these available funds