Sustainable Agriculture Skill Panel Forum
March 6, 2012
Infrastructure

Chair: Stephen Shrader
Facilitators: Susan Maddox
Recorders: Serrylee Kanakaole-Wong & 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 agricultural infrastructure?
   b. What is the current state of labor and labor shortages affecting infrastructure?
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?
   • Ag crime; brainstorm creative solutions and a dependable foundation
   • Create more successful agriculture
   • Recruit more people to Ag industry
   • Want to find and keep good people
   • Access water for small farms
   • Farm housing
   • Help alleviate transportation issues for employees
   • To learn
   • Looking for ideas and solutions
   • Sustainable farm industry
   • Sustainable kitchen for farmers
   • Increase workforce; training
   • Learn more about laws, resources and referrals available
   • Recently moved from the mainland and want to learn
   • Need more resources
   • Trying to find help for small farm
   • To take notes and learn (5 students from WHEA)
   • Gather information
II. Setting the Context Discussion

*What is the current state of communication between education entities and the agricultural infrastructure?*

- In Ka‘u, the community is famous for killing every project that comes into the community
  - Educate the community on life and business skills (ag skills) toward sustenance
- Educate Farmers
  - Including keeping books and legalities
  - Teach how it’s done and initiate practicum for future farmers
- Certificated Training
  - Assist Hawaii Community College with curriculum development
  - Create internships and on-the-job program
- Reciprocal Communication
  - Not adequate communication between farmers and education on all levels (K-12, post-secondary)
- Support Services
  - Create a social network for immigrant labor force
- $$$ (profit and sustainability)
  - Can’t hire people without money
  - Infrastructure depends on money
  - Lack of inspectors; increase certified inspectors and seek regulations to provide creative ways to address shortage
  - Remove current legal barriers that inhibit product exportation
- Government process
  - Inconsistent legislation, i.e., farmers here cannot use certain chemicals and yet the produce being imported does not have a similar restriction

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

- Current state is poor
  - High costs of shipping, energy, etc.
  - Not sufficient markets on Hawaii Island
  - No established distribution channels
  - Is difficult to compete with mainland wholesale price
  - People shop price first; local products are generally higher price points
- High liability insurance costs
- Difficult to find accurate information and access to resources
  - Centralized online help for farmers that is easy to read
  - Local Japanese farmers might not seek Ag information from non-familial sources
• Limited farmer capacity and lack of information on what the market wants
  o Farmers need to be told where the market demand is
  o Department of Agriculture no longer issues product analysis reports
• West Hawaii Extension Agent position has been open for a long time
  o The University is more focused on research; Cooperative Extension for farmers is needed
  o Certification inspectors and regulators are needed
• New farmer loans from Department of Agriculture
  o 3% interest for new farmers up to $250,000
  o Farm Services Agency has guaranteed loan program for new producers
• Cash flow challenges
  o Create collaborations and co-ops
  o Educate farmers on how to secure contracts
• Productive labor force
  o Need employees knowledgeable in equipment use, maintenance & repair
• High cost of worker housing
  o Create ‘ohana dwellings on the land that are directly related to Ag activities
• High cost of energy and transportation
  o Challenges with HELCO and regulations
  o Work where you live
  o Entrepreneurship needs to be encouraged
  o High cost of monopolistic public utility
• Limited available land and high cost of land
  o Move Ag leases from Department of Land & Natural Resources to Department of Agriculture

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?

• “Food, not lawns”, victory garden-type situation with people growing crops at house
• “Good food, good medicine” . . . non-GMO food
• Farmers adopting schools
• Model farms and communities in every climate zone
• Compost all organic waste
• Farmers getting a living wage
• Average age of farmers will be 40 years old, not 60 as is currently the case
• Business education and mentoring readily available for farmers
• Diversified ag; robust farming from small to large scale farming and ranching
• Strong market for value-added products
• Alternative energy readily available at low cost
• Integrated distribution system in place
• Legal residential camps
• Students able to intern for 3 months in each of the climate zones
• Employees are well trained and receive livable wage
• Significantly decreased imports and significantly increased use of local products
• Vibrant network of school gardens with strong community volunteer participation

IV. Develop Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are the opportunities or supporting forces that will move us closer to our best case scenario/vision?</th>
<th>What are the barriers or restraints that hold us back from moving closer to our best case scenario/vision?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Priority 1: Government**  
(5 votes) |  |
| • Delivery of programs and infrastructure – IAL  
• New Farmer Loans and assistance  
• Regulation – level playing field | • Regulation process lengthy  
• Administration of programs  
• Underfunded inspectors and personnel  
• Smalls farms being regulated same as large scale farms |
| **Priority 2: Production**  
(5 votes) |  |
| • Renewable energy  
• Import replacement  
• Year-round production climate  
• Market availability for local inputs  
• Cooperative hiring of employees  
• Co-ops  
• Crop insurance  
• Value-added | • HELCO  
• Invasive species  
• Ag crime and crop theft (farm watch)  
• Workforce legality  
• Being profitable; rising costs of inputs, land, energy etc.  
• Workforce and housing  
• Lack of diversified seed availability |
## Priority 3: Education

(2 votes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are the opportunities or supporting forces that will move us closer to our best case scenario/vision?</th>
<th>What are the barriers or restraints that hold us back from moving closer to our best case scenario/vision?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • School Gardens  
• Veteran interaction in Ag  
• High school with Ag emphasis  
• Master Cho (10,10,10)  
• Farmers as mentors  
• Farmers adopting schools  
• “Food, not lawn” program  
• Certificated training in Ag  
• Educate about true costs of Ag  
• Educate public on value of Ag  
• Community interest in Ag | • Communication is poor to non-existent  
• Difficult to find accurate, comprehensive, easy-to-understand information  
• Regulations and information sources are not user friendly  
• High education costs |

V. Outline Actions for Priorities

**Priority 1: GOVERNMENT**

- Increase number of import and export inspectors
- Assist in policy that will decrease imports
- Legislation that recognizes the differences between small farms and large scale agriculture
- Increase availability of transportation options to various markets
- Study feasibility of using volunteer Ag inspectors
- Adapt existing models used elsewhere to Hawaii needs
- Support legislation that will increase the amount of farm worker housing

**Priority 2: PRODUCTION**

- Create small neighborhood co-ops to share hiring, machinery & equipment, and other resources
- Promote “Buy Hawaii, Buy Local”
- Create FarmWatch programs (similar to Neighborhood Watch) to deter theft and vandalism
- Create and issue Market Report (to match market needs with farmer production and vice versa)
- Build more commercial kitchens
- Create website and other information sources that provide farmers with needed information in easily accessible, understandable, user-friendly format