

**Sustainable Agriculture Skill Panel Forum**  
**June 7, 2012**  
**Labor Issues**

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**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 labor issues?
    - b. What is the current state of labor and labor shortages affecting Maui's agriculture industry?
  - 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?**

- Gain information about agriculture in schools to see a resurgence of agriculture in the education system
- Ensure students' college and career readiness
- Support career paths
- Learn how to transition high school students into agricultural higher education
- Gain tools to advance current agriculture employee education
- Help aging workers pass knowledge down
- Help former farmers learn current methods to farm again
- To hear concerns and questions
- Find out how to help farm employers be/stay in compliance
- Build upon CTE Natural Resources pathway, including aquaponics, to help high school students transition to college and careers in agriculture
- Represent the local Workforce Investment Board
- Help students grow healthy foods to: bring families together, support health, and place students in local agriculture jobs
- Help youth see the value/benefit in agriculture jobs and connect them with employers
- Support local Workforce Investment Board and Alu Like participants finding agriculture jobs and help change their mindset

- Support Agriculture Skill Panels with data and job outlooks
- Support pipeline students entering agriculture industry, especially internships and post-grad support

## II. Setting the Context Discussion

### ***What is the current state of communication between educational entities and the agricultural industry on labor issues?***

- Lack of infrastructure/unified direction between education and industry
- Technology trends must be kept current to keep strong relationships
- Job Fairs: infrastructure and attendance are a concern
- Lack of centralized information with easy access to information portals
- Lack of personal communication
- There is plenty of information, but poor logistics
- Difficult communicating the rewards and appeal of the agriculture industry
- Poor communication between educational efforts
- Lack of funding for education and resources to support agriculture programs
- Parents not participating in the process to bring education into families
- Communication between human resource departments and education is lost, especially for professional associations (like SHRM)
- Partnerships between large communication entities and higher education are lost
- Disconnect between education and agriculture industry
- Agriculture industry is transitioning with no surety of what agriculture in Hawaii is or how it will be defined
- Future Farmers of America is a bridge into the past. CTE is the current pathway.
- Lack of communication about how agriculture is a “lifestyle”

### ***What is the current state of labor and labor shortages affecting Maui’s agriculture industry?***

- Lack of defining options in agriculture
- Lack of work ethic
- Lack of information on agricultural opportunities
- Only 2% of an aging workforce are feeding 98% of the population
- Maui is in limbo between old plantation agriculture and upcoming agriculture like aquaculture
- Many youth aren’t getting Carl Perkins opportunities (like CTE pathways)
- Lack of investment in youth
- Many resources for youth aren’t going to special populations
- College once had CTE teaching certifications, but these no longer exist
- Prices of food increase because of shortages (like having to pay to bring in migrant workers)

- Negative perception of agriculture with the youth causes us to bring in workers
- Perception of agriculture by parents who are talking kids out of agricultural work
- Labor shortages because of folks not understanding “Agriculture is a lifestyle, not a job”
- Aging employees don’t get to take ownership and tell youth agriculture is attractive
- Education teaches reading, writing, etc., but it doesn’t usually expose youth to hands-on agriculture early
- Not all teachers teach kids the way they need to be taught
- Maui not eating what we grow; most is shipped out
- Education has no local advisory board to build paths to agriculture jobs beginning K-12, although CTE has a statewide Natural Resources Pathway Advisory Board
- Employers generally don’t need many specialists; they need new employees and youth who are willing to learn and work outdoors
- Specific cattle and coffee issues are causing labor shortages
- Lack of commitment to buy local to reduce shortages even when they are paying a premium for local
- Lack of support for small farmers to start up
- Agriculture is the least funded department in the college
- Takes lots of money to prepare the soil as we transition out of previous mono-crops
- Substance abuse issue on island
- High cost of living

### **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 to support Maui’s agriculture industry?***

- Buy local, grow local, employ local, with 95% of food grown local and exporting high value crops
- Full employment
- Cultivating community value and connections
- Every school has an agriculture enterprise that feeds students
- Agricultural enrichment day or week in every school with a fun “mascot”
- Government supports education and agriculture
- Agriculture career path and farming is realistic and incentivized
- Procurement regulations for education and corrections facilities require only Hawaii grown food
- Effort to lower age demographics of farmers
- Hawaii grows our own animal feed for local livestock
- State incentivizes homesteading for small farms that are viable
- Agriculture industry-specific education programs
- Interdisciplinary agriculture curriculum for K-College
- Agricultural land is affordable and accessible with private land owners

- Students understand the multi-facets of agriculture
- 3-year demonstration farms encourage programs that are simultaneously self-sustaining and educational
- Resources and support available to create integrated, self-sustaining agriculture programs
- Agriculture takes a focus in education like Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). STEM becomes “STEAM”.
- Students consider agriculture as a career
- Honest analysis of land use and water
- Accountability
- Land zoning practices keep agricultural land as agricultural land
- Agriculture is “sexy”, appealing, and attractive

#### IV. Develop Priorities

<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: The “image” (I)**  
**(8 votes)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to recapture old values while moving forward from a romanticized past</li> <li>• Find champions for agriculture movement/create a brand like KTA</li> <li>• Outreach the public</li> <li>• Increase public/farmer interaction</li> <li>• Create a local USDA “Know your farmer, know your food” program</li> <li>• Take advantage of historical/cultural assets</li> <li>• Partner with organizations like Boys &amp; Girls Club</li> <li>• Have media competition for youth promoting agriculture with corporate sponsorships and air them on TV (great for senior projects)</li> <li>• Have community gardens connected to parks and community farms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Values in non- agriculture community</li> <li>• Lack of support at home to go into agriculture careers</li> </ul>
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**Priority 2: Shared Vision (V)  
(6 votes)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find current systems that work to model agriculture industry after</li> <li>• Work together with all neighbor islands</li> <li>• Create more opportunities for discussions/forums like this</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficult to put aside individual differences to agree on a big picture</li> <li>• Like herding cats</li> <li>• Lack of total buy-in</li> <li>• Special interest groups</li> <li>• General lack of understanding the necessity of agriculture in Hawaii for food security</li> </ul>
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**Priority 3: Politicians/Politics (P)  
(6 votes)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a wider leeway to help new land lessees get on their feet</li> <li>• Should get rid of incentivizing farmers not growing crops. These funds should instead be spent on helping new farmers get started.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lip service: politicians say they support agriculture and that it's a priority, but they don't show it with policy decisions or funding</li> <li>• Bureaucratic roadblocks</li> <li>• Land, water, resources, zoning, and funding</li> <li>• High cost of doing business in Hawaii</li> <li>• Food safety issues restraining local agriculture from providing food for the visitor industry like hotels and cruise ships</li> <li>• Lack of available resources</li> <li>• A general need to be on the offensive with politicians</li> <li>• It takes time to change. Discussions like this have happened before, but often nothing came from it and there's a lack of politician feedback from discussions like these.</li> </ul>
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**Priority 4: Education and Training Opportunities (E)**  
**(3 votes)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop mentor programs that value the mentors and their expertise</li> <li>• Get corporate sponsorships for annual “cooper-tition” events</li> <li>• Local schools or school boards open to opportunities like school farms</li> <li>• “AG” becomes a certification for high school teachers</li> <li>• Fund content area experts to partner with teachers (mirror this from the construction industry)</li> <li>• Educate the Board of Education so they believe in agriculture as a priority so their policy decisions will have impact on agriculture industry</li> <li>• Utilize agricultural experts to teach agriculture in culturally appropriate ways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of trained workforce</li> <li>• Lack of agricultural knowledge</li> <li>• Agriculture educators are not usually educated in agriculture</li> <li>• Lack of hands-on experience opportunities and internships</li> <li>• Lack of employer education to communicate resources and labor programs (like the Volunteer Internship Program with DLIR)</li> </ul>
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**Priority 5: Status Quo (S)**  
**(3 votes)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take action on decisions from meetings like this</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes time/effort to change</li> <li>• Discussions like this happened before but nothing changed</li> </ul>
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**V. Outline Actions for Priorities**

**Priority 1: The “Image”:** Recapture past values while moving forward from the romanticized past.

- Use media to sell agriculture; create a local brand (ex.g., No Ka’oi)
- Create an agricultural business incubator with UH for agriculture-related business and marketing skills
- Recapture old values by encouraging mentorships/internships, and provide more support for mentors and guidance and resources, and match mentors with interns

- Encourage and share resources about the Small Business Administration's program SCORE to help experienced, retired agriculture workers to mentor beginning farmers
- Participate in the small business development network
- Actively support and help develop meaningful K-12 agriculture programs
- Support agriculture images of future leaders in Hawaii
- Make agriculture in Hawaii a priority

**Priority 2: Create a Shared Vision: Put aside individual differences for the sake of the "Big Picture."**

- Identify agriculture champions to push agriculture and a shared vision forward
- Teach 21<sup>st</sup> century agriculture soft skills in schools including: communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity
- Put aside individual differences
- Partner to identify, create, and support win-win scenarios
- Encourage accountability
- Overcome barriers of distance to come together as a state instead of by county
- Share best agriculture practices

**Priority 3: Politics/Politicians: Show support of agriculture through policy decisions.**

- Identify legislative agriculture advocates/champions
- Clarify legislative process
- Share grassroots success stories with legislators and others