

Sustainable Agriculture Skill Panel Forum
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Expand Regulatory Capacity

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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 regulatory issues and capacity?
 - b. What is the current state of labor and labor shortages affecting regulatory capacity?
 - c. What regulatory capacity is needed for the growth of the agriculture industry?
- III. Preferred Vision in 10-20 Years
- 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?

- Help farmers
- Education for farmers
- Expand agriculture
- Standards to be met for marketing
- Sustainable use of lands
- Increase ability for farmers to meet
- Food safety
- Ensure farmers continue to comply with food safety
- Health issues
- Food safety standards
- Look at needs for labor market
- Regulations for export
- Food security needs strong inspiration
- Food safety importance
- Regulatory compliance to assist tenant farmers
- Water – no regulatory compliance to distribute or dispense water
- How to support agriculture
- Education specialist – invasive species

- Work with businesses on importation and export agriculture products
- Food safety concerns with local growers
- Work with local growers
- Work with farmers on food safety compliance
- Look at ways to assist farmers
- Farmer

II. Setting the Context Discussion

What is the current state of communication between educational entities and the agricultural industry on regulatory issues and capacity?

- Very little
- Information coming from education is not coming down to the farmer-level
- Extension agents and Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation are not visiting the farms because of staffing issues due to the economy
 - On Oahu there is 1 extension agent
 - There is no effective communication
- There are language barriers with immigrant farmers
- Media and the internet
- The average age of farmers means they are not electronically savvy and often don't use email
- There are cultural differences
- Limited land, water and labor – if we give farmers resources, then they will farm
- Limited personnel resources at UH and HDOA
- DLIR statistics are available, but not published
 - They are posted on the website, but they are not available if you are unable to access the website
- Bulletins
- Regulations are complex and confusing
- Reverse communications are difficult
- Data gathering for surveys is done on-line
- Lack of coordination on land use between HDOA, City & County, etc.
- There is community support, but no support by other entities
- Who is the spokesperson for agriculture land use?
- The US government enforcement of farmers with more than 3 employees
- We need to find a contact person to explain regulations
- Need consistent communications by organizations – ONE VOICE
- **Need a directory** to help farmers to contact on ag related inquiries – where to go and who to see

What is the current state of labor and labor shortages affecting regulatory capacity?

- DOA, CTahr, and HFBF have limited communication with farmers
- **Labor shortages in government**
 - Funding cuts
 - Cumbersome hiring process
- Not aimed to help protect farmers
- Regulation perspective can be hindrance; need to help farmers
- Education program to help farmers obtain permits
- Regulations add costs to private sector doing business
- Need more staffing available
- Disconnect with coordination – State versus Federal jurisdiction
- Innovation – pilot project to help with the labor issue
- Younger staff have a different interpretation of regulations and how to achieve a solution; they try to assist in solving problems
- Making future employers aware of ag employment
- Encouraging interest in ag
- Pay scale and salary
- Parent-driven
- Farming isn't sexy
- Education prerequisites for employment are an elective
- Coordinate curriculum requirements
- Course preparation for career determination
- Interdisciplinary degree curriculum is not focused enough for employment
 - Need a better curriculum
 - Local students lack the technical experience and coursework to compete for positions
- Be more adaptive to allow other non-ag graduates to qualify for ag employment
- Imported labor force for farming

What regulatory capacity is needed for the growth of the agriculture industry?

- Need to understand import labor compliance
- We're not filling labor; we need continuous education on regulations from the US Labor Department, DLIR, US Customs and H2-A on third-party employment agencies
 - There is a lack of parity
- The government makes rules, but what about educating farmers; we need to ensure the information is correct
- Make agriculture sexy
- Tie labor to "buy local" and sustainability appeal to ag
- System is more punitive than educational
- Incentive programs to encourage farming
- Encourage local product purchasing to avoid import permit

- Aquaculture development
- Prioritize agriculture
- Ag theft and vandalism versus car break-in involving tourists enforcement
- Technology innovation – aquaculture production, RFID temperature and time

III. Preferred Vision in 10-20 Years

What is the best-case scenario for growing the workforce among farmers and farm workers?

- One-stop-shop to streamline process
- Directory of information
- Prioritize agriculture
- Import replacement
- Need more and bigger farms
 - Ag land and water – long term leases at affordable prices
- Venue to overcome barriers
- Get all state departments to encourage farming
- Support regulatory process to get farms to produce best quality
- Educate farmers to expand production with good quality, safe products to replace imports
- Land availability
- Increase funding for career development
- Increase funding to restore positions
- Language barriers with immigrants

In 10-20 years we envision a one-stop shop to streamline the regulatory process. We will have prioritized agriculture for support and funding. We will be educating farmers and regulators to encourage import replacement. We will be adaptable to technology innovation.

IV. Develop Priorities

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

Secure Ag Lands

- Secure ag lands and other productive ag lands with water
- Unique ecosystem
- Efficient transportation system in place
- Wind farms and solar energy

Community Support for Agriculture

- Current sexiness of local agriculture
- Executive branch to commit to state constitution in support of agriculture

- Incentives

Education

- \$25 million grant to community colleges to support ag
- New technology to support ag
- Support education structures

Encourage Local Ag Production

- Increase costs of imports due to high cost of fuel and labor to encourage local preferences
- Opportunity for livestock feed production

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

Poor Regulations

- Lack of communication and coordination between regulatory agencies and agriculture sector
- Regulations focused on control
- Unfavorable Federal regulations and policies that restrict and/or limit exports

Limited Resources

- Limited fiscal resources
- Lack of skilled educated and regulatory personnel for agriculture
- Complexity and contradictions of regulations
- Language barriers
- Lack of right-to-farm support

Costs

- Lack of affordable long term leases
- Costly transportation and limited options; lack of oversight on fuel surcharges

Report Back on Priorities to Larger Group

1. Roundtable discussions to remove contradictory policies (streamline)
 - Create a one-stop clearinghouse
2. Show me the money
 - Provide funded education program for skilled, educated and regulatory-knowledgeable workforce, including materials in various foreign languages
3. Tax Incentives
 - Reduce PUC rates
 - Reprioritize ag industry
4. Education
 - Roundtable dialogue between entities
 - Internships