

Sustainable Agriculture Skill Panel Forum
January 24, 2012
Infrastructure & Marketing

Chair: Michelle Galimba

Facilitator: Lorraine Lunow-Luke

Discussion Outline:

- I. Introductions: Why are we here?
- II. Setting the Context Discussion:
 - a. Panel Chair's Overview
 - b. What is the current state of communication between educational entities and the Agricultural industry on Agricultural infrastructure and marketing?
 - c. What is the current state of labor and labor shortages affecting infrastructure and marketing?
- 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?

- Be involved in dialog. Big Island to be catalyst to motivate farmers and help people.
- Lava Zones 1 & 2 can't get liability insurance. Need to help farmers get produce out and convert to year-round crops to develop ability to make a living farming.
- Concerned about fair wages and qualified labor and being able to make a living.
- Learn how to deal with labor problems; improve quality of Ag product.
- How do we market our food? Grown to be sustainable.
- Marketing, food safety facility, and technology shop.
- Food sustainability; advocate natural farming.
- Learning how to do organic and natural farming. What resources are available to help us?
- Gain information.
- Receive information; concerned for Hawaii's environment ("sacred garden"); equal farm systems; infrastructure; languages and communication and promotion; international trade.
- How to reach out to customers; hydroponic farming.
- Enroll government's support for Ag as an export.
- Promote Ag in the state and educational programs. How can we collaborate? Labor issues. How to market our produce?

- I study trace minerals in soil which is part of infrastructure; water systems to support Ag into the future.
- Looking community by community to see where we farm, what we consume, and create a baseline report.
- Legislation issues; permitting; support for Ag bills.
- Keeping more cattle here (Big Island). Concerned about work force, need to encourage the next generation of farmers. Affordable water and the infrastructure to make water more affordable.
- County and state work with us to provide land and water.
- Useful models for cooperation in marketing and methods of production. Informing people what the options are.
- Education and youth have a poor image of farming. Encourage young to farm – change image.
- Learn about Ag industry as an option to share with military vets as a possible career option.
- To promote responding to Labor Department survey regarding wages and labor
- See more diversity and value-added farm products. More assistance to farmers. Support to Hawaiian Homesteads. Successes on the farm.
- Learn how to serve our farmer tenants and get more food into the local marketplace.
- Learn, listen, and support efforts to get local food processing centers.
- Thinking about range of jobs that support farmer throughout production process – think of the whole system.
- What is the best venue for marketing? Promoting Ag tourism. Assure farming is viable. Education is needed. Youth locked out of owning land.
- Designing supportive and affordable infrastructure to enable filling larger contracts. Affordable energy. Farmer training program.
- Transportation costs and certification for shipping. International markets to increase market share (China). Workforce is decreasing; the average age of farmers is increasing.
- Listen and participate. Participation in state and military procurement system important to long-term sustainability.
- Get younger workers in. (FFA, FHA)
- Manpower – programs to help develop workforce.
- Devise a process to put local kids into Ag and create more jobs through Ag.
- Educate youth; need for qualified employees; curriculum to include basic Ag and hands-on opportunities.

II. Setting the Context Discussion

Panel Chair's Overview

Building and strengthening a comprehensive, responsive support system is fundamental to the vitality of this industry. A highly integrated communication network must effectively reach all farmers, policy-makers, buyers, distributors,

consumers, etc. Marketing, as a key component to connect products to consumers, must be well coordinated and supported throughout our island community.

- a. (Re)building the Processing and Distribution Chain for Local Products. Job opportunities: food hubs, value-added processing, conglomerating, distribution. Cold Chain Infrastructure as leverage point. Packaging, packing, and value-added: dealing with regulations.
- b. Market Access: Local and Global. Networking, planning/collaborating for consistent supply and quality; price-setting and margin: accounting skills for Agripreneurs; accessing global market information.
- c. Product Branding: telling your story/standing by your product. Branding as value-added strategy for your farm; branding Hawai`i Agricultural products: collaboration with hospitality industry; showcasing farmer stories: building the appeal of Agriculture as a career.

What is the current state of communication between educational entities and the agricultural industry on agricultural infrastructure and marketing?

- Hawaii is still in its infancy; we need to focus on the mental edge.
- Gap exists between CTAHR's research and graduate training and the farm.
- Lack of communication between education and Ag.
- Culinary schools are a model of connected education.
- Need programs that help farmers learn how to add value to their products.
- Lack of Hawaii graduates from higher education who stay and work in Ag here, i.e., no connection with education.
- Issue of youth not going into Ag because they can't make money at it.
- Ag in DOE curriculum has gone through restructuring – focus is on other areas, so no exposure of youth to Ag.
- Want training for farm workers when they start their jobs, training in food safety and HAACP.
- Perception by youth that farming is too hard, they want to work in government.
- Knowledge and teaching at university level are not applicable on the farm; there's a gap between book learning and applied [work].
- Ag labor is often immigrant. How do we communicate with and educate an immigrant force? They are not college educated.
- Immigrant laborers know farming, but they are marginalized because they don't have a degree.

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

- Example: Successful immigrant farm family – child got marketing degree which helped them be successful.

- Not enough quarantine inspectors, has a big impact on farmers and economy due to more bugs and disease.
- How can Farm Bureau help support farmers?
- Liability insurance is an important support service to farmers, but can't get it in Lava Zones 1 & 2. Youth could work on farms during their school breaks, etc., but they can't without insurance.
- Not enough machinists and mechanics to repair farm equipment.
- Not enough farm laborers.
- Not enough technical people with knowledge of Hawaii Ag (for example: scientist couldn't identify local weeds).
- WOOFERS program: provides imported laborers to work on organic farms – why not locals?
- Housing is too expensive, can't get housing for workers.
- Regulations don't allow farmers to live on leased land.

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 and marketing?

- Pool of laborers (e.g. fruit pickers) that are covered for liability insurance to draw from.
- H1 visas are readily available for our needs.
- Diverse multi-channeled distribution and processing systems.
- CTAHR is proactive in farming outreach.
- Food Safety Certification Certificate program exists.
- A truly one-stop shop for skilled labor exists.
- Science and technology will be a big part of farming (robots, high tech computers); new ways to farm.
- Accessible health insurance for farmers and workers.
- Dedicated elementary, middle school, and high school Ag programs with hands-on mentoring and internship components.
- Vocational education available – people will be able to graduate from trade and tech programs and be qualified to get a job.
- Ag is viable and attracts educated people (in science and technology, etc.).
- Scholarships are offered. Ag education is more affordable and includes a service component on the farm.
- Mentorship program with business people provides input to help farmers grow their businesses.
- Workforce Development office is partnered with business on an internship program.
- On-the-job training for students in trade programs.
- More overarching, statewide, collaborative programs that don't duplicate functions.
- Student loan support for those who are interested in Ag to go to college, e.g., loans forgiven when they work in the field.
- Exports/Imports; good flow of currency; solid Chamber of Commerce.

IV. Develop Priorities

<p><i>What are the opportunities or supporting forces that will move us closer to our best case scenario/vision?</i></p>	<p><i>What are the barriers or restraints that hold us back from moving closer to our best case scenario/vision?</i></p>
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Priority 1: Collaborative Opportunities for Value-Added Products, Distribution and Marketing (C)
(18 votes)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for collaborative venture in processing facility. • Get college involved in marketing to help change image. Use successful examples. • Great resource on the Big Island is its artists and the good Art Department at UH. Could be part of a collaborative marketing effort. • Good models exist, for example: cooperatives manage output and costs, “Adaptations” project. • Produce list sent to hotels by Adaptations project. • Grow by developing contracts for example with local chefs. • “Process modeling” to educate about who is real customer. • Develop a distribution cooperative to share costs. • Diversify products to create stability and buffer against global market changes. • Produce packaging locally. • Develop programs that help farmers learn how to add value to their products. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costly to create a certified kitchen/processing facility near production. • Global markets impact local markets.
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**Priority 2: Quality of Education: Producing Skilled Workers (B2)
(12 votes)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet the youth on social media (e.g., points on Farmville for working on local farm). • Help youth understand what is farming – science, marketing, etc. • Develop food safety training programs for workers when they start work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we meet our youth where they are? • Students far removed from where things come from. • Not enough machinists and mechanics to repair farm equipment • Not enough technical people with knowledge of Hawaii Ag (e.g., technician could not identify local weeds). • Lack of Hawaii graduates from higher education who stay and work in Ag here. • Youth don't go into Ag because they can't make money at it. • Ag in DOE has gone through restructuring; focus is on other areas, so no exposure of youth to Ag. • Perception by youth that farming is too hard, they'd rather work in government.
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**Priority 3: Regulations (H)
(11 votes)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do more to protect Ag land. • Ag does currently pay lower taxes than others. • Make the tax rate more fair to farmer who is making living off of land. • Consider percent of land that is used for Ag when setting tax rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Ag land lost – gentlemen farms, Aloun Farms developing housing, etc. • Tax barriers, inequities, disincentives for Ag • Counties haven't identified what are important Ag lands • Disconnect between zoning and usage • Consider that different growing times affect productivity.
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Priority 4: Government and Other Support Services (E)
(10 votes)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner on transportation. • Cooperative marketing for small farmers with CTahr’s help. • Decrease costs of inputs by producing them locally. • Provide support for local farmers and producers. • Farm Bureau support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barriers to marketing include many small individual farmers who may not have marketing background. • High cost of inputs. • Expense to ship – transportation costs. • Not enough Quarantine people.
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Priority 5: Outreach & Information Gap between Education and Ag (B1)
(9 votes)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gap exists between CTahr’s research and graduate training and the farm. • Lack of communication between education and Ag. • Knowledge/teaching at university level is not applicable on the farm – gap between book learning and applied.
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Priority 6: Farm Labor Pool (G)
(3 votes)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 companies in Waimea source Laborers. • WOOFERS provides imported labor on organic farms, could provide local labor, too. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough farm laborers. • Housing too expensive, can’t get housing for workers. • Regulations prevent from living on leased land.
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Other Clusters (1 Vote Each)

- Insurance Availability
- Immigrant Labor and Communication
- Focus on Mental Edge

V. Outline Actions for Priorities

1. Collaborative Opportunities for Value-Added Products, Distribution and Marketing

- Look at model in Taos, NM: Food center with certified kitchen, incubator, mobile slaughter house, etc.
- Connecting could be done with an interactive website – an “Ag Dating Service”; for example, connecting farmers with graphic designers.
- Develop collaborations between farmer, food science professionals, marketing professionals, and distributors.
- Share options on how to add value to product.
- Develop business connections with other countries to create export opportunities.
- Publish a “Hawaii Guide to Value-Added Products” for farmers -- how-to, what are regulations and requirements, etc.

2. Quality of Education: Producing Skilled Workers & the Next Generation

- Make sure Ag is one of the DOE career tracks. Ag is not just farming.
- More focus on Ag specific courses – not lumped in with general natural resources. Need targeted funding.
- Include more hands-on, student service learning
- Develop a cluster around Ag education: national labs, research universities, and applied professionals should collaborate to determine the educational process and type of worker needed. What are you educating them for?
- Increase the conversation – create a “critical mass” of information around Ag education for public and government. “Glamorize” it, give it “sex appeal.”
- Bring together different extension classes in one place for farmers (CAS model).
- Publish a farm manual that compiles information from buyers on what they want.
- Use new technology tools to educate youth.
- Develop a traveling exhibit to go around to schools: each exhibit with a different component of Ag – “Wide, Wide World of Hawaii Ag.”