

Sustainable Agriculture Skill Panel Forum
May 11, 2012
Food Safety

Chair: Scott McFarland

Facilitator: Toni Ka'a'a

Recorder: Caroleen Tabata

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 food safety?
 - b. What is the current state of labor and labor shortages affecting food safety?
 - 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?

- What we eat, health, journey of food
- Further information for grant new to Kauai Community College
- Looking into regulations regarding farmers/legislative wise. Food safety palatable for small farmers needs safety flexibility. Exemption confusion. Where are farmers on this?
- Want to pull food safety to the front burner for farmers. How to help farmers with this and still stay profitable. Create food safety certification enforcement of that.
- Interest in the market and chairperson
- Answering questions on regulation and access to resources and tools for farmers
- Keeping family health; food processing
- Food safety
- Big part of business; cost to business; unique skill set
- Incorporate into labor market information for employers; student and workforce development
- Find out skills and needs of industry to train students; what do employers need?
- Concerns with mineralization of soil; concerns with contamination of land; concerns with bird issues; share experience
- We all need to be aware of food safety, not just farmers and ranchers. Every level food travels must share in the kuleana.
- Want to share knowledge to help keep up consumer confidence

- Hazards, dangers, diseases; tailored food security approach; share information about grants; hearing discussion – thoughts and concerns
- To learn; seek knowledgeable employees; best practices; local workforce
- Transportation issues; cost factor to be food safety compliant
- Get Information

II. Setting the Context Discussion

What is the current state of communication between educational entities and the agricultural industry on food safety?

- Communication is robust but not focused
- There is work in this area now on some scale
- There hasn't been that much interest until now. Liability issues have risen. Markets are starting to put some certifications into action and provide resources.
- Expense barrier between agricultural and insurance providers. No communication or education. Disconnect in accountability between permitting, inspecting, and insurance and farmers/education continuum
- Need more research from educational entities to keep us ahead of the game and innovations
- Appreciate expert information; inspectors are "looking" for things and making inspections unpalatable and too costly. Food safety so far has been a turn-off cost wise. We need help.
- The topic is unpacking now; the industry is changing
- We need coaching for farms funded by the Department of Agriculture
- Kauai Community College Farmers' Market has liability issues concerns; it's the 1st 100% certified market
- Jointly develop an educational tool; share knowledge via internet
- Need for crop-specific protocols
- Farmers want to be part of discussion with specialists instead of being told; that's the feedback from farmers who participated in a prior program that included a grant to help with food safety
- Cost strategies for implementation
- Every market has different protocols; we need protocols for all that are reasonable and done by the entity
- Certification is cumbersome but critical. Farmers are avoiding it. There needs to be a state standard. Do it online? If they can't get certification, we have to go and help them.
- We need to prepare for an annual audit; we can help coach them to avoid food safety issues. People need to support it, not have a "just for certification to pass" mindset; it should be part of regular business.

What is the current state of labor and labor shortages affecting food safety?

- Limited personnel skills; they need entry skills or an associate level degree in agriculture, including food safety. Need to go off-island to get agricultural knowledge base.
- Plant Bioscience is available at Kauai Community College, but it needs students
- Need to look at challenges and create education from there. First, properly name classes.
- Occupations are limited by codes for reporting. They may need to be overhauled for today's labor market. Legacy occupational codes need updating.
- "Agriculture" had bad reputation, but now that sustainability is at the forefront, perhaps we can go back.
- There is a disconnect between the culinary world/dining table and agriculture/farm. The land around schools should be given to encourage agriculture working with agriculture programs like UH, Future Farmers of America (FFA), Home Economic programs, etc.
- Entry-level certification in related field
- Knowledge needs to be archived at the university/college; there is a need for people with the working sense of working on a farm
- UH/Community Colleges have programs, but there are not many students for Plant Bioscience
- Our "Plantation" style agriculture means: (1) Did all research and didn't share; (2) cultural clash for qualified individuals who don't understand local style/culture
- Competition with larger companies who can pay better wages, and get better workers; kids don't want to get dirty, i.e., they go into culinary
- If farming is "sexy", it boosts agriculture and interest
- Whatever plan we make needs to be looked at as a long/lifetime process. Start young.
- It needs to be at the DOE level. Where are they?
- Farming is positioned for a "new image" – marketing, advertising
- Biosystems engineering (Michigan State) is getting grants
- 4-H led to farming to agriculture
- Consortium of UH campuses for agriculture includes marketing (i.e., farmer superstar).

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 strong food safety by the agriculture workforce?

- Agriculture viewed as our kuleana, as part of the culture of agriculture
- Victory Gardens taught K-12 in public school system
- Standard practice/process in place for all and it's easy
- Central infrastructure with added value

- Farmers cooperatives do happen and work well
- Need to research what is possible and needed
- Less seasonal, more full employment
- Duplicate successful farmers and share information. Do area-based research for crops. Study how workforce labor is being hired. Farmers create the education. Simple.
- Farmer education and sharing
- \$3.1 billion leaving out state for agriculture; 10-20 years from now the worst case scenario is we're still importing; the best case scenario would be local production, community agriculture. We would be keeping food dollars in the state and in our pockets.
- Children mimic adults, and their culture of agriculture. Children are taught from the very beginning and only one standard.
- Cooperation among farmers with local incentives. One local brand – marketing, safety. Put problems and tools in the hand of farmers. Centralized and value-added incentives.
- STEM education. All schools have knowledge in this field with no disconnect with surroundings communities. A clear vision of what's possible and what needs to be done.
- Inspection leaders – who should they be?
- How, in future have lawsuits evolved?
- Kids' involvement in agricultural program
- Infrastructure appropriation and agricultural incentives
- Protecting farmer resources; market standards are met and farming is profitable
- There is money to be made in agriculture. It is a lucrative career choice. The whole food system needs to be communal—not just farmers.
- Statewide agriculture in the classroom is built on partnerships
- Local ingredients and chefs' menus
- Transition, if needed, from one crop to another to keep land in farming. Use agriculture land to do value-added products; IAL (important agriculture lands) need to be designated. Farmers need incentives to encourage them to put their land in IAL.
- Food safety is common sense
- Implementation of one, clear standard, and ample personnel for coaching, training and being out in the industry for support. The public understand agriculture—it's everybody's responsibility—not just farmers.
- Food Safety inspectors present
- Inspectors available 24/7
- Vocational education for good workers
- Land planning statewide to protect land
- Transportation
- Market standards met and profitability for all
- Once the product gets off the farm the chain can't be broken
- Agriculture in the classroom program; internships; train the trainer program
- Change development of menus—use the local stuff; source/origin

- Less self-interest
- Lawsuit should have a cap and should be spread – not only the farmer; personal responsibility
- Food safety compliancy should bear the burden of the liability
- Kauai Community College is pioneering in aquaponics; land use/IAL must be followed through on.
- A system that enables both small and large farms to work.
- Public understands agriculture and is “willing to pay” to have good infrastructure for agriculture.

IV. Develop Priorities

<i>What are the opportunities or supporting forces that will move us closer to our best case scenario/vision?</i>	<i>What are the barriers or restraints that hold us back from moving closer to our best case scenario/vision?</i>
--	--

Priority 1: No common food safety standard or regulation for State of Hawaii (9 votes)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food safety/agriculture, etc. at forefront now—use momentum • Lab station – more/local for testing • Educate lawmakers – focus and documentation • Create organization that will get this done; Food Safety Task Force • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DOH not here; absence of important county and state agencies. • No added value/blocks to creating added value; DOH regulations • Different standards for different venues, no clear standard • No local testing lab station • Need inspectors to do a good job • Conflict with farmers on how to solve problems; no consensus on strategy for food safety. • Government credibility problems – no credibility
--	---

Priority 2: Align State Agencies and Local Authorities (9 votes)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Uncommon vision from Attorney General – Government funding.</u> Need organization/need common vision/focus/drive • US Agriculture service • Experimental stations • USDA-ARS opportunities/researchers • Expand extension services (UH) consult • Better public/private partnership – 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DOH not here; absence of important county and state agencies. • <u>Uncommon vision from Attorney General – Government funding.</u> <u>Need organization/need common vision/focus/drive</u> • State procurement system needs to be fixed/DOE, DOA, DLIR, etc. • Dynamics – far apart; differences and common ground; get past differences
---	---

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> feedback; work with industry experts; model • Educate lawmakers – focus and documentation • Create organization that will get this done; Food Safety Task Force 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need inspectors to do a good job • Government credibility problems – no credibility • We don't have a major food safety crisis management plan
---	--

Priority 3: Access to & Affordability of Compliance (8 votes)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food science technology • Expand extension services (UH) consult • Intellectual property is out there somewhere. Latest and best technology used and filtered down to small farmers • Evolution of technology – “latest and best”; examples: (1) bottle with nitrogen gas and lime juice – 6 months shelf life; (2) patented process – microfilter system; (3) UV light treatment system – fruit juice/Govinda • Financial tools available for small farmers, i.e. lower interest loans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooked books in business plans doesn't help anyone • Funding (state legislature); support and resources are needed • Build budget/financial opportunities—need an agency that will help • No local testing lab station • Need inspectors to do a good job • Small farmers lack equipment/resources to get it • Inadequate information out there on skills needed and new skills needed; diverse agriculture, common skills, divergent skills • Reliable food tracing or tracking
---	---

Priority 4: Education – Training programs for food safety and inspections; disconnect between education facilities and communities (5 votes)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical assistance from agencies • Small Business Development Center • Agri-Business incubator (PGM @ UH Manoa; Steven Chang) • US Agriculture service • Food science technology • Experimental stations • USDA-ARS opportunities/researchers • Expand extension services (UH) consult • Intellectual property is out there somewhere. Latest and best technology used and filtered down to small farmers • Evolution of technology – “latest and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Plan support still needed • Lack of resources to help with financial/capacity building/business development • Inadequate information out there on skills needed and new skills needed; diverse agriculture, common skills, divergent skills
--	--

<p>best”; examples: (1) bottle with nitrogen gas and lime juice – 6 months shelf life; (2) patented process – microfilter system; (3) UV light treatment system – fruit juice/Govinda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn and build upon initial efforts to learn and improve upon system • Strengthen and grow available scholarships • Graduating class – create internships • New funding for agricultural scholarships at all school levels on Kauai • Documentation/focus 	
--	--

Priority 5: Farmer peer-to-peer training systems. You need grassroots movers and shakers aligning the process. (4 votes)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agri-Business incubator (PGM @ UH Manoa; Steven Chang) • Farmers need to align • Learn and build upon initial efforts to learn and improve upon system • Strengthen and grow available scholarships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers need to work together; safety of products; reliable food tracing/tracking • Lack of resources to help with financial/capacity building/business development • Conflict with farmers on how to solve problems; no consensus on strategy for food safety.
--	---

Priority 6: Next wave of farmers – no incentives and rewards to go into agriculture. (3 votes)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Business Development Center • Agri-Business incubator (PGM @ UH Manoa; Steven Chang) • Experimental stations • Farmers need to align • Strengthen and grow available scholarships • Graduating class – create internships • Financial tools available for small farmers, i.e. lower interest loans • New funding for agricultural scholarships at all school levels on Kauai 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of resources to help with financial/capacity building/business development • Small farmers lack equipment/resources to get it • Inadequate information out there on skills needed and new skills needed; diverse agriculture, common skills, divergent skills
---	--

Priority 7: Certification Required for Market Participation (2 votes)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insert opportunities identified for this cluster • Meat production; pasteurization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No local testing lab station • Need inspectors to do a good job • Reliable food tracing or tracking
---	---

Priority 8: No product liability insurance or risk management instruments for food safety (1 vote)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insert opportunities identified for this cluster 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No local testing lab station • Risk management; lack of insurance policies that cover issues; need risk management instrument
--	--

Priority 9: The value of compliance is not recognized in the chain (0 votes)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kauai Grown Branding program • Farmers need to align • Personal responsibility – consumer; choosing and promoting food • Better public/private partnership – feedback; work with industry experts; model • Educate lawmakers – focus and documentation • Employer awareness on utilizing “green” buttons • Expand on social media type information like special advertising on “green” employers offerings/needs; online business directives • Utilize social media /applications that point you to local produce, etc., e.g., bar code application, where grown • Documentation/focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insert barriers identified for this cluster • Conflict with farmers on how to solve problems; no consensus on strategy for food safety. • We don’t have a major food safety crisis management plan
--	--

Priority 10: Make the process clear, user-friendly and affordable (0 votes)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Business Development Center • Agri-Business incubator (PGM @ UH Manoa; Steven Chang) • US Agriculture service • Food science technology • Experimental stations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No local testing lab station • Business Plan support still needed • Small farmers lack equipment/resources to get it • Inadequate information out there on skills needed and new skills needed;
---	--

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand extension services (UH) consult • Learn and build upon initial efforts to learn and improve upon system • Create organization that will get this done; Food Safety Task Force 	<p>diverse agriculture, common skills, divergent skills</p>
--	---

V. Outline Actions for Priorities

Priority 1: No food safety standard or regulations for the State of Hawaii (DOA, DOH).

For workforce development priorities and resources to be focused, there needs to be one set of food safety standards and regulations for the State of Hawaii. Those standards need to be crop-specific, location-specific, and science and technology-based.

Priority 2: Align and retrain educational institutions, state agencies, legislators and local authorities.

- Need input from the farmers, agricultural producers, food manufacturers and retailers
- Educate legislators
- Make food service compliance clear, user-friendly and affordable