



Hawaii Agriculture Research Center

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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE

HOUSE BILL 3310

RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

February 8, 2008

LATE
Testimony

Chairman Tsuji and Members of your committee:

HARC strongly supports the intent of House Bill 3310 Relating to Agriculture but requests that this committee recommend \$1.0 million for fiscal year 2008-2009 to the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFBF) for research and market development.

HARC wishes to express its appreciation for the past support the legislature has shown to the continuing need for research, development and marketing for the agricultural community. The history of agriculture here demonstrates that there are three critical areas of support to achieve sustainability and they are R&D, education and training, and a good business model. The continuing support for R&D by the legislature demonstrates its desire to have a successful agricultural economic sector, the backbone of our rural communities. You recognize that having successful economic opportunities in our rural communities helps reduce congestion in urban areas, and allows a rural life style.

This proposal is requested as part of the implementation of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation's Strategic Plan. As set forth in the Research and Development and Marketing and Competitiveness portion of this plan, the HFBF is coordinating the necessary partnerships to advance the agricultural sector. Through the Farm Bureau, the agricultural community has been consistent in seeking the necessary support for land reform through the designation of important agricultural lands, healthy irrigation systems and support for agricultural research and marketing.

Through a widely disseminated request for proposals and scientific review process the Hawaii Farm Bureau is reaching the producers and serving their research needs.

We appreciate and are thankful that the past trend of declining state support for agriculture has been halted; hopefully it can be reversed. State funds for this effort before the devastating decline of the 1990s was over \$4M and supported the establishment of much of the diversification of agriculture. The sector needs to continue to diversify and to do that needs research support.

Foreign governments provide substantial funding to help their farmers become ever more competitive. Hawaii's farmers need similar strong government support to secure affordable land and adequate water, improve their yields and product quality, and increase efficiency and marketability, in order to participate in the local as well as global marketplaces.

We strongly urge you to pass out House Bill 3310 with a recommendation of \$1.0 million to the appropriation committee and thank you for the opportunity to testify.