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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO FARMERS.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that recent conditions  
2 such as drought, floods, and volcanic emissions have resulted in  
3 a loss of agricultural jobs. Economic farming conditions also  
4 make it difficult to attract and retain farm operations in the  
5 State. Over the past fifteen years, the number of farmers under  
6 the age of thirty-five has decreased dramatically. This trend  
7 could cripple the agricultural industry when older farmers are  
8 lost to retirement.

9           The legislature further finds that sustainable food  
10 resources are vital for the State's economy. Hawaii currently  
11 imports ninety per cent of its food at a cost of  
12 \$45,000,000,000. Without importing food, it is estimated that  
13 the State only has a seven day supply of food, particularly  
14 perishables. An increase in farming and agricultural activities  
15 would provide locally grown food and produce that would reduce  
16 the need to import agricultural products.



1           The purpose of this Act is to establish the beginning  
2 farmers assessment task force to investigate and report on  
3 programs to assist beginning farmers.

4           SECTION 2.   **Beginning farmers or livestock producers**  
5 **assessment task force; membership; duties; report; termination.**

6   (a) There is created the beginning farmers or livestock  
7 producers assessment task force to be placed in the department  
8 of agriculture for administrative purposes. By no later than  
9 August 1, 2009, the chairperson of the board of agriculture  
10 shall appoint members to the task force, with representation  
11 from the following:

- 12           (1) Department of agriculture;
- 13           (2) Hawaii farm bureau federation;
- 14           (3) University of Hawaii college of tropical agriculture  
15                 and human resources; and
- 16           (4) Representatives of other interested organizations or  
17                 stakeholders, at the discretion of the chairperson,  
18                 who can contribute to the mission of the task force.

19           The taskforce shall elect from among its members a  
20 chairperson and any other officers it deems necessary. Members  
21 shall not be compensated, but shall be reimbursed for necessary



1 expenses, including travel expenses, incurred in the performance  
2 of their duties.

3 (b) The task force shall convene its initial meeting no  
4 later than twenty days after the director has appointed all the  
5 members of the taskforce. The duties of the taskforce shall  
6 include the following:

- 7 (1) A study of the current state of resident owners of  
8 agricultural assets with at least fifty per cent of  
9 the gross annual income from agriculture and a net  
10 worth of at least \$100,000;
- 11 (2) Public outreach to these resident owners to assess  
12 their willingness to rent agricultural assets, such as  
13 processing plants and vacuum cooling plants, on a  
14 share-rental basis with beginning farmers or livestock  
15 producers if provided incentives, including but not  
16 limited to tax credits;
- 17 (3) Identification of recruiting networks of potential  
18 beginning farmers who would be interested in  
19 participating in a program that would work with  
20 resident owners who want to rent agricultural assets  
21 to beginning farmers; and



1           (4) Assessment of the potential economic impact of  
2           expanding agricultural production through such a  
3           program, estimate potential revenues, and the costs  
4           and benefits of such a program.

5           The task force shall submit a report and its findings and  
6           recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the  
7           legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of  
8           the 2010 regular session.

9           (c) For purposes of this Act, a "beginning farmer or  
10          livestock producer" is a person who:

11          (1) Is a Hawaii resident;

12          (2) Is actively involved in farming or livestock  
13          production and seeking to make a livelihood in the  
14          agricultural sector;

15          (3) Has a net worth of less than \$100,000;

16          (4) Provides the majority of day-to-day physical labor and  
17          management on the farm; and

18          (5) Is not related to the owner of agricultural asset.

19          SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general  
20          revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$                    or so  
21          much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2009-2010 for  
22          the beginning farmers assessment task force.



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1           The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of  
2 agriculture for the purposes of this Act.

3           SECTION 4. The task force shall cease to exist on June 30,  
4 2010.

5           SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2009.

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INTRODUCED BY:

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**Report Title:**

Beginning Farmer Assessment Task Force

**Description:**

Creates a beginning farmer assessment task force to investigate the decline of beginning farmers and to identify those interested in programs designed to help them.

