



Hawaii Farm Bureau
F E D E R A T I O N

LATE

2343 Rose Street • Honolulu, Hawaii 96819
Phone: (808) 848-2074 • Neighbor-Islands: (800) 482-1272
Fax: (808) 848-1921 • Email: info@hfbf.org
www.hfbf.org

FEBRUARY 23, 2012

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

TESTIMONY ON SB 2522
RELATING TO CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR VETERINARIANS
Room 229
9:00 AM

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Taniguchi, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Chief Operating Officer and Government Affairs Liaison for the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFBF). Organized since 1948, the HFBF is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide, and serves as Hawaii's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic and educational interest of our diverse agricultural community.

HFBF offers the following comments on SB 2522 that would establish a veterinary license renewal requirement for continuing education. Our interest in this proposed mandate is to ensure that veterinarians not only keep abreast of new developments in their field so that they can remain competent, but also that the new requirements are not so burdensome that they discourage recruitment and retention of government veterinarians in Hawaii. Our farm and ranch members work closely with these dedicated professionals and we respectfully request that any new mandate imposed upon them be reasonable, fair, and cost-effective.

We respectfully request that the Committee incorporate into the legislation the mandate that course requirements are reasonably priced, easily available in Hawaii, and relevant.

- Continuing education classes should be offered on a wide range of topics and **relevant to all types of veterinary practices**, including that of livestock veterinarians.
- **Online classes or webcasts** should be offered in addition to "in person" attendance, allowing veterinarians to take the classes after work hours or on weekends. There is precedent for this---the Hawaii State Bar Association mandatory continuing legal education program for Hawaii attorneys offers webcasts for a \$60 fee for three credit hours, on demand throughout the year.
- Classes should be **readily available in Hawaii** so that the law does not tacitly mandate expensive mainland travel and excessive missed work time.

LATE

If the above options cannot be accommodated, we respectfully request that the State reduce or eliminate the new requirement for veterinarians who work for the government. Lower license fees and class fees for government veterinarians may also be appropriate.

Although HFBF certainly supports the intent of this measure, we want to make sure that this additional burden will not discourage our much-needed agriculture-related veterinarians by making it less attractive for them to stay in government practice in Hawaii.

The nation is already suffering from a dearth of large animal and livestock veterinarians and Hawaii should not compound the problem. Hawaii State veterinarians are already behind their counterparts in salary; requiring them to pay for mainland trips to fulfill a new continuing education mandate will equate to a several thousand dollar annual pay cut for them. It is unfair to make our State veterinarians pay exorbitant costs from their own pockets to make trips to the mainland; however, it is also unrealistic to think that our State agencies' budgets can incur these expenses.

Thank you very much for your support of Hawaii's farmers and ranchers through your thoughtful consideration of our comments on this measure.

Please contact Janet Ashman at (808) 848-2074 if you have any questions.