

SB326

Testimony

LATE



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

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January 29, 2013

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

TESTIMONY ON SB 326
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Room 229
2:45 PM

Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair Kouchi, and Members of the Committee:

I am Dean Okimoto, President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFBF). Organized since 1948, the HFBF is comprised of 1,950 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 supports of SB 326 which creates and appropriates funds for a good agricultural practices (GAPs) task force to develop food safety guidelines for locally farmed products.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has proposed two new food safety rules that will help prevent foodborne illness. The proposed rules implement the landmark, FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and are available for public comment for 120 days.

Many of Hawaii's farmers are extremely concerned about potentially onerous requirements stemming from these proposed FMSA rules. The proposed FSMA rulemaking speaks to flexibility applicable to types of production and size of operation. It is not a one size fits all. Currently farmers are faced with multiple certification requirements that tend to be a one size fits all format. Third party certifiers located on the mainland are costly and retailers often have different requirements.

The task force will provide the mechanism for our farmers to collaborate with stakeholders to identify GAPs that are product and location appropriate, and assure food safety. Food safety involves not just the farmer but the entire supply chain. As the regulating body tasked with ensuring food security for Hawaii, HDOA is the logical entity to lead this task force.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our testimony on this important matter.