HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE, 2017
STATE OF HAWAII

H.C.R. NO. 145

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES, UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MANOA COLLEGE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES AND UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT HILO TO FORM A TASK FORCE FOR EVALUATING THE FEASIBILITY OF FOREST FARMING PIGS ON THE STATE'S AGRICULTURE LANDS.

WHEREAS, pigs evolved in Southeast Asia about two million years ago living in forests, especially where there are oak trees that produced acorns; and

WHEREAS, due to the challenges and labor involved in hunting wild pigs, humans began to tame them about 12,000 years ago; and

WHEREAS, pigs have played an important cultural role in Hawaii since Polynesians first transported them to the islands in Canoes in the 1200's; and

WHEREAS, pigs quickly became a popular food source because they are so easy to keep, would eat almost anything and their meat could be easily preserved with salt; and

WHEREAS, ninety-seven percent of U.S. pig meat currently comes from tame swine raised on conventional farms; and

WHEREAS, these traditional farms primarily feed their stock corn and soybean meal with dried whey for additional protein; and

WHEREAS, though most pigs are raised in captivity, wild populations still exist and are highly prized for their complex rich flavor and meat color; and

WHEREAS, a small but growing niche market for pasture forested pigs which exhibit organic wild pig meat characteristics is emerging within the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, grazing tame pigs in forests have been casually practiced in one form or another since their formal domestication; and

WHEREAS, almost 1,000 years ago in the eastern shires of England, European pannage was a common practice; and

WHEREAS, this consisted of releasing pigs into the forest to feed on fallen tree nuts and seeds. It was considered a right or privilege granted to local people on common land or in royal forests; and

WHEREAS, in Spain the multifunctional agro-sylvo-pastorial system called dehesa became common 800 years ago and were usually linked to the large properties owned by military orders; and

WHEREAS, it may have been a simply land management strategy which provided additional economic agricultural byproducts; and

WHEREAS, presently Spanish dehesas continue to still be used for pig grazing September through April when trees are producing their nuts and seeds; and

WHEREAS, dehesas are the largest and most notable pasture forested pig operations in the world; and

WHEREAS, English pannage is no longer practiced but can still be observed yearly with 600 pigs for a minimum of sixty days at the New Forest National Park; and

WHEREAS, these two agroforestry systems serve as examples for many small production operations scattered throughout Europe and the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, in non-industrialized countries pigs still are set out to freely roam and find their own feed in the bushes or forest; and

WHEREAS, they return to sheltered wooden pens in the evening for warmth and sleep; and

WHEREAS, pigs raised in this way take four to five times as long to grow to harvest size; and

WHEREAS, pigs are currently blamed for damaging native forests when grazing ungulates were primarily responsible for the majority of deforestation in Hawaii in places such as Kahoolawe and Haleakala and the slopes of the Big Island; and

WHEREAS, demand for richer flavored, redder colored, better textured and more humanely raised pigs continues to grow in industrialized counties; and

WHEREAS, some believe this sustainable approach to agriculture is what will feed the future; and

WHEREAS, the market for this product is still miniscule in comparison to that of industrialized operations and research has not yet been conducted to determine if pasture forested pigs could be sustainable or profitable on a large scale; and

WHEREAS, as more rural communities continue to shrink, more agricultural land will become fallow in the United States; and

WHEREAS, rejuvenating forest ecosystems in conjunction with pig pasture management strategies like this may increase biodiversity and productivity; and

WHEREAS, pasture forested pigs will remain an important product until the small niche market is saturated or cost and production rates are competitive with conventionally methods; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session

of 2017, the Senate concurring, that the Department of Agriculture is requested to convene a task force including but not limited to representatives from the Department of Land and Natural Resources, University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, and the University of Hawaii at Hilo and any other relevant parties for evaluating the feasibility of forest farming pigs on the state's agriculture lands; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture is requested to report to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2018 on its efforts, including any proposed legislation, to develop and implement a reforestation and forest farmed pig program using state agricultural pasture land; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture, Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources, and the Dean of the University of Hawaii at Manoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, and the Dean of the University of Hawaii at Hilo College Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resource Management.

OFFERED BY: Richard Onaga

MAR 10 2017