

HB-236

Submitted on: 2/14/2021 1:06:24 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/17/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Luis F Aristizabal	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Hawaii State Legislature Members,

Over last 10 years the Hawaii coffee industry has faced the Coffee Berry Borer (CBB), the most serious insect pest affecting coffee plantations worldwide. The control of this pest by the use of *B. bassiana* (BotaniGard) in combination with cultural control practices (sanatation) have showed a descrease of CBB infestations levels and an improvement in coffee quality. Now, we as coffee farmers are facing the most devastating plant disease affecting coffee crops around of the world, the **Coffee Leaf Rust (CLR)**. I want to be clear, **CLR is worse than CBB**. So, any support to coffee farmers regarding both issues is extremely necessary to keep the coffee industry producing one of the best specialty coffees in the world. The best solution to control CLR is by the establishment of coffee plant resistant to CLR. So, we do not have those plants here in Hawaii. Therefore, the only alterantive we have is the use of preventive and systemic fungicides to protect and control CLR, until we get resistant coffee plants. Several sprays of preventive fungicides (3-6 sprays) and systemsic funguicides (2 sprays) during the coffee season are needed to prevent coffee trees defoliation and the reduction of coffee production that culd be higher than 60% if we do not spray. additonal cultural practices are recomeded, but the control of this devastating coffee disease is by the combination of thsoe practices and sprays of fungicides both (preventive and systemic).

Mahalo,

Luis F. Aristizabal

Independent Consultant on Coffee Production

Coffee Farmer

HB-236

Submitted on: 2/14/2021 1:40:48 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/17/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sandra Scarr	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am a Kona coffee farmer whose 5 acres are already showing Coffee Leaf Rust symptoms. We must stop this devastating disease before it destroys our heritage coffee trees. Spraying for Coffee Berry Borer has received some subsidy in the past years, for which we are grateful. In Kona farmers have quite successfully kept the CBB infestations under control,, thanks to financial help from state and federal reimbursements..

Now we need additional help to fight a recently discovered, even more deadly pest that actually defoliates and kills the trees. Please pass this bill to help farmers continue to control CBB and fight CLR. The 175 year heritage of Hawaii coffee depends on it.

HB-236

Submitted on: 2/14/2021 2:30:30 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/17/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Cynthia Maryanoff	KCFA	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Committee on House Agriculture Committee Members,

HB236 will extend the HDOA pesticide subsidy program to combat CBB through July 1, 2023, and authorize subsidies to combat coffee leaf rust. An important positive feature of HB236 is that it would combine the CBB and CLR subsidies under a single program with a single administrator. This is WONDERFUL news for hard working small coffee farmers already suffering through pandemic lack of sales.

PLEASE support this bill. Fighting CBB is an unbelievable amount of work, resources and money for a small farmer. When the pandemic closed the hotels and retail stores, income just dried up. Now we are hit with leaf rust: airborne spores so it's going everywhere. You need only look around the big island of Hawaii **and see all the DEAD Ohia trees** and realize leaf rust will spread easier and feel scared that we will be able to survive it all!

Having the Hawaii House Agriculture Committee Members on the side of the small farmers would be such a relief, mentally as well as financially!

We, and every coffee farmer in Hawai'i, can provide compelling evidence of the importance of extending and providing continued funding for the pesticide subsidy program to assist farmers in battling the damage threatening the future of coffee growing in Hawaii.

First we had CBB infestation [Mahalo for your support].

Then we had volcanic activity and VOG

Then the pandemic really took out coffee sales.

NOW we have leaf rust!

On behalf of all of the small Kona coffee farms, we are submitting this written testimony **to support HB236 and extend the HDOA pesticide subsidy program to combat CBB through July 1, 2023, and authorize subsidies to combat coffee leaf rust**

Our two Kona coffee farms [Honalo Farm; Cynthiana Farm] have annual infestations of coffee borer beetles. As fledgling farmers, we were shocked to realize how vulnerable our coffee crop was to beetle damage, **and how much work it was for each farm to battle this harmful pest.** Indeed, it is a lot of work for every coffee farmer to battle the beetle. Thus, we really appreciate your continued support of the current HDOA-administered subsidy program for Botanigard and Mycotrol, which are rather expensive pest-control materials. Without this governmental support, we (and other coffee farmers) could not maintain the economic viability of the coffee business. {actually the pandemic took away any change of getting out of the red for most small Kona farms}. Having enough quality coffee at the end of the growing season is exceedingly important. The volcanic VOG was harmful for coffee as well so yields have been affected badly. **For us, the investment to get started was huge and then to have to battle the beetle; it's been work, work, work, spend, spend, spend. We thank you for the support thus far. Then came the pandemic and the collapse of wholesale sales.**

The threat of Coffee Leaf Rust creates a risk that Hawaii-grown coffee will join sugar and pineapple as lost Hawaii-heritage agriculture crops.

Hawaii's coffee farmers ask for your support and ask that you please support HB236 to establish a new HDOA fungicide subsidy program to combat coffee leaf rust and continue support against CBB..

Mahalo in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

Bruce and Cynthia Maryanoff

cmaryanoff@comcast.net

14 Feb 2021

HB-236

Submitted on: 2/15/2021 7:56:18 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/17/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Cecelia Smith	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please continue this **very valuable** subsidy for Kona coffee farmers in controlling the Coffee Berry Borer and including the dreadful Coffee Leaf Rust. This is an important effort for we farmers as the cost of controlling these issues is extremely expensive.

Mahalo and with aloha,
Cecelia Smith

HB-236

Submitted on: 2/15/2021 8:04:28 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/17/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Bob Smith	Smithfarms.com	Support	No

Comments:

This is an important issue for coffee farmers.

HB-236

Submitted on: 2/15/2021 1:16:33 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/17/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Bruce Corker	Rancho Aloha	Support	No

Comments:

Chair Hashem, Vice-Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee:

I am a coffee farmer in the North Kona District of Hawaii County and I am a member of the Board of Directors of the Kona Coffee Farmers Association.

I strongly support HB236 to extend the HDOA’s subsidy program for control of Coffee Berry Borer (CBB) and to add subsidies to combat Coffee Leaf Rust (CLR) to the existing program. This subsidy program will encourage farmers to adopt measures to control CBB and CLR—and help to preserve the economic viability of coffee as a commercial agricultural crop in Hawaii.

Also, in order to prevent further introduction of coffee pests and diseases into Hawaii, I suggest that the Legislature should require and fund an investigation by the HDOA into how CBB and CLR were brought into the state—and mandate the HDOA to develop a vigorous program (similar to California’s protections for its farmers) for preventing entry of invasive pests and diseases in the future.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Corker

Holualoa, Hawaii County

HB-236

Submitted on: 2/15/2021 2:05:35 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/17/2021 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jim Monk	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Jim Monk and I'm a Kona coffee farmer. I have used the CBB subsidy program for a number of years and it has made a difference in my ability to work at controlling this terrible pest. Please support HB236 to extend this program and to add support for the coffee leaf rust subsidy. Coffee leaf rust has now come to our islands and has the potential to severely damage the coffee industry in the state. The cost of the CLR sprays is unbelievable -- over \$250 per gallon and you need a number of gallons over the course of a year. Without a subsidy this single product can cause a major dent in the coffee revenue we receive. Please help us.

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

JOSH GREEN
Lt. Governor



PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

MORRIS ATTA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

TESTIMONY OF PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
February 17, 2021
10:00 A.M.

HOUSE BILL NO. 236
RELATING TO COFFEE PEST CONTROL

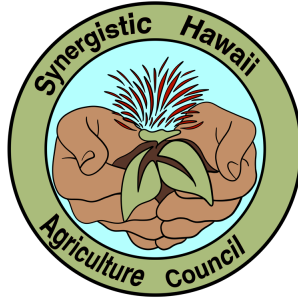
Chairperson Hashem and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 236, relating to coffee pest control. This bill extends the pesticide subsidy program to June 30, 2023 and extends the position of the pesticide subsidy manager to June 30, 2024. The bill also expands the pesticide subsidy program to allowing reimbursements to growers for the purchase of biopesticides and fungicides to be used against the coffee berry borer and the coffee leaf rust. The pesticide subsidy program manager would process the applications for both pesticides. The Department supports this measure and offers the following comments. The pesticide subsidy program is currently funded by the pest inspection, quarantine, and eradication special fund. The department understands that the future of the special fund is uncertain and we are also unsure whether the existing expenditure ceiling is adequate to fund and effectively perform the additional program responsibilities proposed in this measure.

Invasive species are a primary threat to Hawaii's agriculture and economy. The coffee berry borer (*Hypothenemus hampei*) is a significant coffee pest in Hawaii and the world. The extension of the subsidy program and program manager position will allow the Department to continue to support coffee farmers by partially offsetting the costs of purchasing certain pesticides that contain *Beauveria bassiana* as an active ingredient, and certain fungicides, such as Priaxor Xemium in order to control the coffee berry borer and the coffee leaf rust to mitigate the damage these organisms cause to the coffee beans and plants.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





RE: SUPPORT for HB236

RELATING TO COFFEE BERRY BORER

Coffee Berry Borer; Coffee Leaf Rust, Subsidy Program

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

The Synergistic Hawaii Agriculture Council stands in support of this Bill. Our three founding associations - the Hawaii Papaya Industry Association, the Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association, and the Hawaii Coffee Association - represent 1,000 businesses, from growers to processors and shippers, stretching across the State of Hawaii.

The coffee berry borer (CBB) is a devastating invasive pest that continues to spread around the state. Economically, many smaller farms struggle to keep up with the cost burdens that CBB has introduced. Close to 1,000 farms have been impacted by the beetle. This subsidy increases the participation of growers in pest management and has made control much more effective regionally. By lowering the cost of the product, more growers are likely to treat the pest, and the overall quality of the crop increases.

For every \$50 in subsidy costs spent per acre, approximately \$600 in improved crop value is returned to the farmer. This has the potential to increase income by up to \$2.4 million across our Kona, Ka'u and Maui coffee communities. The University of Hawaii estimates that each agricultural dollar circulates 11 times through the community, via local wages, goods and services. Supporting ag is good for the economy.

This program should be funded at a minimum of \$200,000 per year to continue the current rate of subsidy, including the provision for program staffing.

Thank you for considering support to this bill. Your attention makes a difference in the lives of hundreds of farmers.

Mahalo nui loa!

Suzanne Shriner
Administrator



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Agriculture
Wednesday, February 17, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

By
Nicholas Comerford, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 236 – RELATING TO COFFEE PEST CONTROL

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Perruso, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of the intent of HB 236 relating to the coffee berry borer (CBB). This testimony is similar to that presented for the Senate companion bill SB 855.

According to the 2018 State Agriculture overview published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Hawai'i produced 5.4 million pounds (green weight) of coffee grown on 7,100 harvested acres, with an average yield of 1.92 tons/acre, at a unit price of \$19.40/lb., for a value of \$50.16 million. These data show the high value of this crop to Hawai'i agriculture since that value is based on using just 0.65% of farm acres operated.

CBB is found in most coffee growing countries of the world and was discovered in Kona, Hawai'i in 2010. It has the potential to be a devastating disease for this industry. It is established on Hawai'i Island, and can be found now on other islands. CBB is endemic to Central Africa. It belongs to a subfamily of beetles that houses some of the most important pests world-wide. Female beetles bore into the berry and lay eggs inside the seed and the brood then feasts on the coffee seed. As this phase of the CBB life cycle occurs inside the berry and seed, it can be difficult to control.

An integrated pest management program (IPM) developed Best Management Practices to control CBB. Collaborative research has shown that sanitation along with biocontrol can be effective. Cooperative Extension Agents with the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa have estimated pre-pandemic that about 80% of coffee farmers are familiar with the IPM program. CTAHR Cooperative Extension Agents further estimate that the IPM program has directly saved more than \$11 million in farm gate value, and saved another \$11 million in efforts to control the spread of CBB. CBB control provides the value far in excess of the cost.

The IPM program uses an insecticide (pesticide), known as a mycoinsecticide, to control the borer. A fungus, *Beauveria bassiana*, is a biological control material and is bought commercially. The Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) was empowered in the past to develop and manage a CBB pesticide subsidy plan, allowing as much as \$600/acre for the grower. The basic approach of this bill is to maintain parts of that program into the future, until 2026.

The IPM program has been shown to be effective in the control of CBB. There is concern that without a full functioning subsidy program, efforts to apply IPM would be reduced; thereby reducing the on-farm and regional effectiveness of the strategy. A survey of coffee growers indicated that nearly 38% of growers would reduce the rate of the pesticide applied if the program was detrimentally affected. It is reasonable to assume that this would negatively affect the control and spread of CBB.

Given the estimated \$22 million/year effectiveness of the IPM program that is supported by this bill, we are in strong support HB 236 and will continue, through Cooperative Extension, to educate and train growers on the use of the IPM program.

We also understand that we are in difficult economic times and that there is much competition for budgetary matters. This program is centered in HDOA, and we defer to HDOA as to their priorities, as well as personnel and budgetary matters.



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February 17, 2021

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

TESTIMONY ON HB 236
RELATING TO COFFEE PEST CONTROL

Conference Room 325
10:00 AM

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice-Chair Perusso, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawaii Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB 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 interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawaii Farm Bureau supports HB 236, which extends the sunset date for the Coffee Berry Borer Pesticide Subsidy Program until 6/30/2024, for the purchase of pesticides containing *Beauveria bassiana* to combat the coffee berry borer. It also extends the program manager position to 6/30/2024.

Coffee is one of Hawaii's signature crops; one that helps bring fame and tourists to Hawaii. Coffee Berry Borer (CBB) threatens the entire Hawaiian coffee industry. While the full tally is yet to be made, farms on Hawaii Island have experienced deep losses. Some have failed. Moreover, large quantities of coffee have been downgraded due to insect damage, reducing the value of the remaining crop. CBB is a serious threat to Hawaii's agriculture industry and the state's economy. While CBB is battled worldwide, no other coffee-growing origin shares Hawaii's high labor costs and restrictions on pesticides that may be used elsewhere to fight this destructive pest. This places the industry at a competitive disadvantage when compared to the rest of the coffee-growing world.

Fighting CBB is a priority in other coffee-producing countries. The USDA has expressed its support targeted toward research, education, and mitigation. The industry's response has been immediate and multi-faceted. A non-profit CBB task force has been formed, including growers, processors, HDOA, UH, USDA and county government. CTAHR and HDOA have been responsive and effective in their combined efforts. The industry has

committed countless private-sector dollars and has leveraged both State and Federal funds.

A CTAHR economic analysis estimates FY2013 crop losses due to CBB at \$7.68 million, with a resultant \$571,000 annual loss in state tax revenues. The extension of the CBB Pesticide Subsidy Program should be viewed as a modest investment in one of the state's largest and most important agricultural crops.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure of great importance.



February 16, 2021

Aloha Chair and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Kona Coffee Farmers Association (KCFA), please accept this testimony in support of HB236.

Our non-profit is a membership organization of 208 current active members. The purpose of KCFA is to support and protect the economic interests of Kona coffee farmers, and the nearly 200 years of heritage of Kona coffee.

Working closely with our Representatives, we continue to seek assistance through pest and disease problems in Hawaii which affect our membership and the broader coffee industry.

Since Coffee Berry Borer Beetle (CBB) is established in Hawaii, with no expectation to fully eliminate, farmers are slowly adapting to control as efficiently as possible but it still costs time and money.

With the recent confirmation of Coffee Leaf Rust (CLR) as a relatively new pest, farmers who had experienced a light harvest year last season are now faced with unclear and complicated advice of extensive and expensive inputs in order to seek to abate this new problem, and assistance is needed to combat this serious concern. Note that one of the potential inputs that should be subsidized equally as others is fertilization, since tree health is a vital component of fighting the CLR infestation (much like human immune systems in fighting off a viral infection). Please include this in the language of the final copy of HB236.

Brining these programs together to operate a subsidy support mechanism under the direction of the Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA) is both logical and efficient and will work well for farmer access.

Please work with KCFA and others in the coffee industry (as we have diligently attempted to do ourselves) to ensure that farms do not go out of business because of emergency pest control needs.

We are happy to discuss amendments details, if suggested, but building upon a successful program which the CBB subsidy has been means that this legislation can move forward with a combined CBB and CLR program which will support the integrity and viability of Hawaii coffee farmers.

Many thanks for the opportunity to testify in support of HB236, and to share the position of our farmer-based coffee organization.

Sincerely,

Colehour Bondera
President, Board of Directors

