

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

MORRIS M. ATTA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI
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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

FEBRUARY 15, 2023
9:00 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325

HOUSE BILL NO. 606
RELATING TO MEAT PROCESSING

Chairperson Gates and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 606. The bill requires the Department of Agriculture, in collaboration with the Hawai'i Interagency Council on Homelessness; Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife; and Department of Health, Food Safety Branch, in consultation with the County of Maui Axis Deer Task Force, to develop and implement a plan to expand the meat processing capacity in the State to allow for meat from axis deer and other wild game to be processed for distribution by nonprofit food distribution services by 7/1/2024. The bill also appropriates money. The Department supports the measure to promote processing and donation of meat in the state.

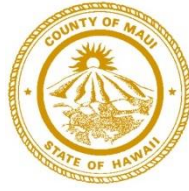
The Department wishes to clarify that while it intends to pursue and fully comply with the provisions of this measure, implementing a plan by 7/1/2024 may be challenging due to the multiple agencies and regulations involved.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.
Mayor

KEKUHAUPIO R. AKANA
Acting Managing Director



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 SOUTH HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.mauicounty.gov

February 14, 2023

TO: Honorable Rep. Cedric Asuega Gates, Chair
Honorable Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa, Vice Chair
House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

FROM: Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor
Rogerene K.M. Arce, Director of Agriculture

DATE: February 14, 2023

SUBJECT: SUPPORT OF HB 606, RELATING TO MEAT PROCESSING

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this important measure. The purpose of this bill is to develop and appropriate funds for the expansion of the State's meat processing capacity to allow for meat from axis deer and other wild game to be distributed by non-profit food distribution services.

Our administration **SUPPORTS** this measure for the following reasons:

1. Axis deer is an invasive species that poses a continuing threat to Maui County, and despite a current ongoing effort to control the growing deer population, there are an estimate of 60,000 deer roaming Maui County. Axis deer mitigation is a serious concern in Maui County because they eat cattle food sources and farmer's crops, cause soil erosion from over grazing, and threaten native species.
2. This measure supports Hawai'i's need to expand meat processing facilities and to accommodate wild game and axis deer meat distribution.
3. This measure would support the use of axis deer and other wild game to be distributed by non-profits for food distribution, which would support fighting hunger in Maui County.

For the foregoing reasons, we offer our **SUPPORT** of this measure.



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February 15, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON HB 606
RELATING TO MEAT PROCESSING

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
9:00 AM

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice-Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 606, which requires the department of agriculture, in collaboration with other state agencies, to develop and implement a plan to expand the meat processing capacity in the State to allow for meat from axis deer and other wild game to be processed for distribution by non-profit food distribution services by 7/1/2024.

Across the State, various invasive species are creating havoc in agriculture as well as the ecosystems in which they exist. Maui County's Axis Deer population is a good example of nature getting out of control with populations exploding due to abundant forage following rainfall events. They continue to destroy crops and pasture lands by devouring any living vegetation as they continue to spread. Feral pigs damage crops by consuming them or by their rooting and trampling of crops. They will eat almost any crop. Feral pigs damage pasture grasses, killing desired plant species and often encouraging the growth of undesired weed species. They can also devastate orchards by consuming fruit, citrus, and nuts and their rooting can severely damage, or even kill saplings, shrubs, and vines directly or by facilitating the spread of soil-based fungal diseases. Feral pigs can also break irrigation lines, rip or tear nets, drying racks, and other agricultural structures and equipment.

These and other feral populations can pose a danger, especially as populations grow and their health is put into jeopardy due to inadequate food. Diseases that they normally tolerate will become serious debilitating illnesses that could put our domestic livestock industry in jeopardy. Such fears are not unreasonable, as incidences such as bovine tuberculosis spread from feral pigs have been documented in Molokai.

Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers are working to provide Hawai'i with an increased level of self-sufficiency, but will not be able to do so if their products are consumed or damaged by feral animals. Axis Deer, feral pigs, and other invasive species can cause major damage to property, agriculture (crops and livestock), Hawai'i's native species and ecosystems, and Hawai'i's cultural and historic resources. They can also threaten the health of people, wildlife, pets, and other domestic animals. As Hawai'i's feral animal populations continue to expand, these damages, costs, and risks will only keep rising

Current state law specifically prohibits the inclusion of meats as a donation. Wild game can be a significant source of protein for Hawai'i's residents in need. Wild game can provide a beneficial outlet for meat harvested from invasive species and provide a tool for long-term sustainable invasive management for Axis Deer and Feral Pigs.

Several states have amended their Good Samaritan laws to use them as a tool for invasive white-tail deer management programs. Wild game meat donated under this provision does not need to undergo antemortem inspection requirements as long as stated conditions are met. Conditions for donations can be specified to allow the donation of this important protein source for our neighbors in need. Utah is the most recent state that passed such a measure and can be used as a model for Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

HB-606

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 10:03:07 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/15/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cathy Goeggel	Animal Rights Hawai'i	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We respectfully oppose HB606

Mahalo



MAUI COUNTY FARM BUREAU

PO Box 148, Kula, HI 96790
mauicountyfarmbureau.org

TESTIMONY

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

February 15, 2023
9:00 AM
Conference Room 325

HB 606

RELATING TO MEAT PROCESSING

Chair Gates and Members of the Committee:

Maui County Farm Bureau (MCFB) appreciates this opportunity to testify on this important issue. MCFB is a general agriculture advocacy organization representing farm and ranch families and organizations on the island of Maui.

MCFB STRONGLY SUPPORTS HB 606, seeking to develop a process to utilize feral animal meats for food as a long term sustainable solution to manage feral animal populations.

Everyone recognizes that we have an axis deer overpopulation problem. In defense, fences are being erected to protect property. However, this does not address the need to reduce populations. Concurrently, there is a public desire to utilize the animals for beneficial use. Other states have developed programs such as "Farmers & Hunters Feeding the Hungry" <https://feedingthehungry.org/> that work and can be utilized as templates for a program for Hawaii.

These programs address the gap between the hunter and distribution to the needy. The process will require coordination as well as development of sustainable funding mechanisms. This proposal seeks to develop such a working group. A side benefit from this effort will be addressing the need for additional meat processing capacity in Hawaii, especially for multi species needs of our smaller farmers and ranchers. Cattle past their prime processing time loses value. Currently ranchers often suffer significant loss waiting for processing opportunity. Maui has a hog processing plant that will cease when the current operator retires due to conditions of the land use permit. Expansion of processing capacity will help address this problem.

Covid demonstrated the need for smaller plants. Federal funding is available for CIP needs while programs such as Feeding the Hungry provide templates for long term operation. Hawaii needs a long term strategy to manage feral wildlife populations. This is a step in that direction. MCFB respectfully requests your strong support of this measure and assistance in identifying workable strategies.

HB 606 includes a very important aspect in addressing the problem which is development of grassroots support. The measure defines the process by which the program is to be developed, recognizing the role of the various parties. It additionally addresses funding needs.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our opinion on this matter. Please contact Warren Watanabe at 8082819718 if there are any questions.



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Rep. Cedric Asuega Gates, Chair

Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa, Vice Chair

HB606

RELATING TO MEAT PROCESSING

Friday, February 10, 2023, 1:00 PM
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards III, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the four county-level Cattlemen's Associations. Our member ranchers represent over 60,000 head of beef cows; more than 75% of all the beef cows in the State. Ranchers are the stewards of over 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or 20% of the State's total land mass. We represent the interests of Hawaii's cattle producers.

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports HB606** which requires the department of agriculture, in collaboration with other state agencies, to develop and implement a plan to expand the meat processing capacity in the State to allow for meat from axis deer and other wild game to be processed for distribution by non-profit food distribution services by 7/1/2024

Expanding access to processing and allowing for the donation of wild game to under-resourced communities allows us to feed these communities high quality sources of protein, while also creating an outlet for efforts to remove invasive species such as deer, goat, sheep, and pigs from the environment. Unmanaged ungulates damage our ecosystems and cause detriment to farming and ranching operations. Expanding access to meat processing will help us to meet both environmental and social needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director





Officers

Kaipo Kekona
State President

Anabella Bruch
Vice-President

Maureen Datta
Secretary

Reba Lopez
Treasurer

Chapter Presidents

Madeline Ross
Kohala, Hawai'i

Odysseus Yacalis
East Hawai'i

Puna, Hawai'i

Andrea Drayer
Ka'u, Hawai'i

Chantal Chung
Kona, Hawai'i

Fawn Helekahi-Burns
Hana, Maui

Reba Lopez
Haleakala, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros
Mauna Kahalawai,
Maui

Kaipo Kekona
Lahaina, Maui

Rufina Kaauwai
Molokai

Negus Manna
Lāna'i

Brynn Foster
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Ted Radovich
Waimanalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Ray Maki
Kauai

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

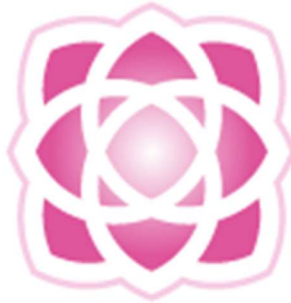
The Hawaii Farmers Union United (HFUU) is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFUU supports HB606.**

We recognize the dire need for options to reduce reliance upon conventional protein sources, particularly in light of the climate emergency. Expanding and diversifying access to locally-sourced protein through initiatives like HB606 are essential in order to build a more agriculturally-resilient and resource-secure food system.

Expanding the meat processing capacity in the State to allow for meat from axis deer and other wild game to be processed for distribution by non-profit food distribution services is essential to the success and vitality of both the agriculture industry and the non-profit food distribution services. With increased and improved processing options, our farmers, ranchers, and local communities have the opportunity to access and benefit from local meat.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kaipo Kekona, President HFUU/HFUF



MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 312
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2023 AT 9:00 A.M.

To The Honorable Cedric Asuega Gates, Chair
The Honorable Kirstin Kahaloa, Vice Chair
Members of the committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

SUPPORT FOR HB606 RELATING TO MEAT PROCESSING

The Maui Chamber of Commerce **supports HB606** which requires the department of agriculture, in collaboration with other state agencies, to develop and implement a plan to expand the meat processing capacity in the State to allow for meat from axis deer and other wild game to be processed for distribution by non-profit food distribution services by 7/1/2024.

The Chamber would like to point out that axis deer, an invasive species that poses a continuing threat to Hawaii's environment, could provide significant quantities of meat as a protein source for nonprofit food distribution services, such as the State's network of food banks and Feed My Sheep, Inc. of Maui County. However, there is a gap between the hunters and the retailers and nonprofit services because the meat requires processing prior to distribution. For meat donation, other states such as Wisconsin and Michigan offer models that Hawaii can assess to develop processes for plan implementation and program funding, including licensing fees and other funding sources managed by wildlife agencies or nonprofits.

For these reasons, we **support HB606**.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.

HB-606

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 11:12:06 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/15/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Regina Gregory	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Should not only be for non-profit food distribution

HB-606

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 11:57:54 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/15/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael I Rice	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I stand in support of this bill, as it can help with conservation efforts and increase Hawaii's food security while at the same time helping to minimize or eradicate nuisance species.

HB-606

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 9:18:28 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/15/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
penny levin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

in strong support. the lack of slaughter facilities and even more so the lack of inspectors in Maui County alone has wasted more opportunities to make use of good meat than you can imagine. a diversity of enterprises will come out of helping to grow our ability to process feral animal meat, from hide to meat to bone.

HB-606

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 9:42:45 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/15/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruth Love	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greatly support this initiative especially if it is to benefit all islands, not just Oahu.

Also, if the meats can be preserved as well at tge processing facilities-for example:smoking, sausages, hams, bacon, jerky. Then that would improve shelf life for the food pantries.

One caveat: need to make sure any wild caught animals: pigs, axis deer, muffin are tested and disease free, especially if this food is going to the vulnerable kupuna, keiki and pregnant women.

Thank you,

Mrs. Ruth Love