



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

April 3, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON SCR 186/SR 170

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND HAWAII ASSOCIATION OF
INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS TO EXPAND THE REVITALIZATION OF THE FUTURE
FARMERS OF AMERICA AND 4-H YOUTH PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT PATHWAYS
TO AGRICULTURE CAREERS IN HAWAII

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
1:01 PM

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chairs Richards, 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 SCR 92/SR 85, which urges the Department of Education and the Hawai'i Association of Independent Schools, in consultation with the University of Hawai'i at Manoa Cooperative Extension, to expand the revitalization of the Future Farmers of America and 4-H youth programs and reestablish and strengthen pathways for youth to find careers in agriculture.

Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers are aging. The average age exceeds 60 years old and if they were in other professions would be retired. Yet many of these farmers are those that provide to supermarkets, restaurants, hotels, and farmers' markets and truly make a difference in reducing imports. Unfortunately for many, succession plans do not exist and as they retire, the lands go out of agricultural production. To maintain and expand production levels, it's clear that we need a new generation of farmers and ranchers equipped to assume the task of growing crops and livestock. There is an urgent need for interns or apprentices that are willing to not only work on these farms but take over their operations.

Hawai'i's 4-H and FFA programs are vitally important to the future of agriculture in Hawai'i. We can no longer rely upon our public education system for the education and training of the next generation of sustainable farmers and ranchers. FFA and 4-H have

a long history of fulfilling this goal. The passion and direct interaction of volunteer farmers and ranchers with young people will help grow and perpetuate the ranks of the next generation of farmers and ranchers. These programs address sustainability on social, economic, and environmental levels. The FFA and 4-H programs have a proven track record of not only exposing and educating young people to positive, hands-on experience in agricultural production but also a program that instills leadership and life skills in a wide variety of projects.

We must strongly support agricultural education for our young people if we are to increase Hawai'i's long-term resilience and sustainability.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this important subject.



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

HB971 HD1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Monday, April 3, 2023, 1:01 PM
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, 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 SCR 186/ SR 170** urging the Department of Education and Hawaii Association of Independent Schools to expand the revitalization of the Future Farmers of America and 4-H Youth Programs to support pathways to agriculture careers in Hawaii.

Today we are more disconnected from our food sources than ever before, yet we all need to eat. As an island state, it is even more important for us to foster growth of our agricultural sector and ensure that young people take the reins to continue food production. Programs such as Future Farmers of America and 4-H are critical for exposing youth to farming and ranching careers and helping them to understand the importance of agriculture. Students who go through these programs emerge with hands-on experience, valuable knowledge, and respect for the industry.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director

