

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEXTER KISHIDA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

FEBRUARY 12, 2024
2:00 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 312

HOUSE BILL NO. 2127
RELATING TO MEAT PROCESSING

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2127. 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 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 7/1/2025. The bill also appropriates money. The Department supports the measure to promote the processing of meat in the state.

The Department would like to note that while it intends to pursue and fully comply with the provisions of this measure, implementing a plan by 7/1/2025 may be challenging due to the multiple agencies and regulations involved.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Rep. Cedric Asuega Gates, Chair

Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa, Vice Chair

HB2127

RELATING TO MEAT PROCESSING

Monday, February 12, 2023, 2:00 PM

Conference Room 312 & Videoconference

Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports HB2127** 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.

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, 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. 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.

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director





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

February 12, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON HB 2127
RELATING TO MEAT PROCESSING

Conference Room 312 & Videoconference
2:00 PM

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 2127, 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 7/1/2025.

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.



Food+ Policy Internship 2024

food@purplemaia.org

February 11, 2024

Subject: *HB 2127 Relating to Meat Processing*

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Committee Members,

We are in support for HB 2127, which calls for the Department of Agriculture and other state agencies to create a plan expanding meat processing capacity in Hawaii. This plan aims to include axis deer and other wild game, allowing non-profit food distribution services to handle the processed meat by July 1, 2025.

This bill is a positive step toward meeting the increasing demand for meat processing in our state. The collaboration between the Department of Agriculture and other agencies to formulate a plan is a good move to support local agriculture and cater to the diverse needs of our community.

Recognizing the unique challenges of processing axis deer and wild game, and involving non-profit distribution services, shows a thoughtful approach that benefits different segments of our population.

Moreover, allocating funds for this initiative is crucial for a smooth implementation, highlighting the legislature's commitment to overcoming potential challenges during the expansion.

In conclusion, we urge your support for and passage of HB 2127. It addresses the growing demand for meat processing in Hawaii, taking into account the unique aspects of axis deer and wild game. It aligns well with sustainable agriculture, community collaboration, and effective resource use. Thank you for your consideration.

Mahalo,
Name+ Hawaii Food+ Policy Team

The Food+ Policy internship develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2024, the cohort of interns are undergrads and graduate students from throughout the UH System. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.



MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

**HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 312
Monday, February 12, 2024 AT 2:00 P.M.**

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

SUPPORT FOR HB2127 RELATING TO MEAT PROCESSING

The Maui Chamber of Commerce would like testify in **support for HB2127**.

The Chamber notes that there is a need to expand Hawaii's meat inspection capacity to fulfill local demand. Consumer demand for locally grown beef, combined with the axis deer population explosion in Maui County, created a reduced antemortem meat inspection capacity.

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.

We acknowledge that the State's meat inspection program was discontinued in the mid-1990s due to cuts to budget and staffing mandated by reduction in force initiatives. Restoring and updating the meat inspection program will not only grow Hawaii's livestock industry but address the beneficial use of axis deer and other ungulates. Supplementing existing federal inspection capacity will also assist the livestock industry with greater access to the marketplace.

This bill will be one of a few major tools in controlling the over-population of Axis deer on all islands.

For these reasons, the we wholeheartedly **SUPPORT HB2127** and respectfully request it be passed to the next committee.

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-2127

Submitted on: 2/9/2024 4:17:26 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/12/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill. Mahalo.

LATE

HB-2127

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 1:09:55 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/12/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
AMANDA FOX	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please do not pass this bill. Please look to more sustainable, green, and health options for food production. Expanding meat production in a state where diabetes affects 40% of the population, and where we are already experiencing massive coral death due to waste, we should not be thinking about increasing the amount of waste produced on our land, nor increasing the amount of unhealthy foods our Kama'aina eat. Please do NOT pass.