

**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  
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 & FOOD SYSTEMS**

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2023**  
**10:00 AM**  
**CONFERENCE ROOM 325 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1350**  
**RELATING TO FOOD SAFETY**

Chairperson Gates and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1350. This bill appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture to establish and implement a GroupGAP food safety training and certification program. The Department of Agriculture (DOA) supports this bill and offers comments.

The Department has a cooperative agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture ("USDA") that allows the Department, pursuant to licensing by USDA, to conduct food safety audits for Hawaii farmers statewide, on a fee-for-service basis. Adding and consolidating Good Agricultural Practices ("GAP") or GroupGAP training for farmers to the Department's regulatory compliance responsibilities may create a potential conflict of interest if the training is also conducted by the same Departmental staff involved in administering the USDA GroupGAP certification program. Combining both the auditing and training programs in the Department could compromise the independence and objectivity of the food safety certification program's audits. It is highly advisable that the educational functions of the program be segregated from the enforcement and auditing functions to mitigate the risks presented by arrangement. As



such, the Department supports this bill which provides appropriation placed under the budget of the Department's Chairperson (AGR 192 General Administration for Agriculture) to establish and implement a GroupGAP training and certification program. This would separate funding for education from the funding for enforcement by the Quality Assurance Division.

The Department notes that UH-CTAHR Cooperative Extension Service has a farm food safety program to educate and train Hawaii farmers to comply with federal food safety regulations. Their Extension Agents work with farmers statewide and they have the technical expertise in FSMA Produce Safety Rule and USDA GAP food safety regulations to educate and train farmers. UH-CTHAR does not currently handle GroupGAP training for farmers but may consider expanding if there are funds to address this type of training statewide.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## ‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

### Legislative Testimony

### Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems  
Friday, February 10, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

By

Anna Wieczorek, Interim Dean  
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources

And

Michael Bruno, Provost  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

#### HB 1350 – RELATING TO FOOD SAFETY

Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1350 relating to food safety. This bill is of great interest to the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR), as we are actively involved in food safety education of Hawai'i's agricultural producers.

Since its passage in 2011, the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) is transforming the nation's food safety system by shifting the focus from responding to foodborne illness to preventing it. The GroupGAP program was created in 2015 to assist small farms with attaining their Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification. As a result of this congressional action CTAHR Cooperative Extension has been deeply engaged in educational efforts to actively provide agricultural producers the information and tools necessary to comply with current FSMA requirements.

The GroupGAP certification is the only comprehensive farm food safety training program in Hawai'i that results in U. S. Department of Agriculture Harmonized GAP certification that is the standard most closely aligned with the Food and Drug Administration's food safety guidelines.

CTAHR's work in this area is confined to education and we have Extension agents in each county of the state who assist agriculture producers in their preparation to pass the GroupGAP certification process. Land Grant universities do not certify agriculture producers for federally mandated programs such as GroupGAP. Likewise, pesticide applicator licenses are issued by the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA), not CTAHR Cooperative Extension. CTAHR Cooperative Extension can help producers prepare for those certifications, but we cannot be the certifying organization.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents approved budget. CTAHR defers to HDOA for 1) the logistics to establish and implement the GroupGAP food safety training and certification program, and 2) the allocation of funds to the entities capable to facilitate the GroupGap certification program for Hawai'i.



67-332 Kaiea Pl.  
Waialua, HI 96791-9501  
808-383-4481  
[www.NSEVP.org](http://www.NSEVP.org)

February 8, 2023

House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems  
*Friday February 10, 2023, 10:00 a.m.*

SUBJECT: Comments on HB 1350– RELATING TO FOOD SAFETY

Dear Chair Gates, Vice-Chair Kahaloa, and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the North Shore Economic Vitality Partnership (North Shore EVP), I would like to extend strong support for HB 1350, which appropriates funds for the establishment of a GroupGAP food safety training and certification program.

Since 2016, North Shore EVP has been working to prepare farmers to fully and equitably participate in Hawaii's commercial and institutional markets by providing food safety training and certification through our USDA GroupGAP program. The federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has implemented more comprehensive food safety regulations for agriculture under the 2011 FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and the implications Hawaii are profound. The need for farm food safety education and compliance is critical to keep Hawaii's 1,400,000 residents and nearly nine million annual visitors safe from foodborne illnesses. During 2016, eight hundred thirty-nine foodborne disease outbreaks were reported nationwide that resulted in 14,259 illnesses, eight hundred seventy-five hospitalizations, and seventeen deaths. Data from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that during that same period, people in Hawaii fell ill during food-related outbreaks about twice as often as their counterparts on the mainland.

Accessing larger commercial and institutional markets that generally require food safety certification is a challenge for Hawaii's 3,682 production farms where over 90% of the farms are under 10 acres and less than 2% are USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certified. Furthermore, the majority of Hawaii's commercial and institutional buyers will not purchase produce from farms that cannot provide food safety and traceability documentation required by FSMA. These buyers will import products that cannot be sourced locally to meet their customer's demands, increasing the State's dependency on imported food.

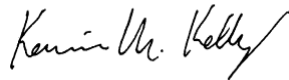
Food safety certification of Hawaii farms is a critical first step toward FSMA compliance and may lead to increased market access and opportunities to increase production for these farmers. The United States Department of Agriculture created the GroupGAP program in 2015 to assist small farms with attaining Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification. GroupGAP reduces the cost of food safety certification by spreading the training, technical assistance, and auditing costs between all farms in the group. Hawai'i GroupGAP is the only comprehensive farm food safety training program in Hawai'i that results in USDA Harmonized GAP certification, the standard most closely aligned with the Food and Drug Administration's FSMA food safety guidelines. This program is voluntary and is designed to reduce the farm-level risk of produce-based foodborne illness by applying and documenting recommended best practices.

At the recent (January 11-12) Hawaii Food Systems Summit at UH West Oahu, 100 individuals representing multiple counties, sectors, and interest groups gathered to discuss and prioritize the state, county, and federal policies needed to bolster the growing movement to transform Hawaii's food system - to ensure health, equity, resilience and natural resource sustainability. The summit resulted in the prioritization of twelve (12) food and agriculture policies that will be supported by diverse subject matter

experts and food systems advocates during this legislative session. While food safety was not one of the policies in that list, several of the policies identified are linked to food safety including continued funding for the food hub program, creation of a state food system plan, and the farm to School program.

As such, providing direct training and food safety implementation assistance through GroupGAP helps reduce the burden on small- to medium-sized farms that are seeking to expand operations, enter new, high demand, commercial and institutional markets, or meet the requirements of their current customers. Support for this bill allows more farms to secure Harmonized GAP certification, and helps build a growing culture of food safety for Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin M. Kelly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent flourish at the end.

Kevin M Kelly, President



**Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.**

**COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD  
SYSTEMS**

Rep. Cedric Asuega Gates, Chair

Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa, Vice Chair

**HB1350**

RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Friday, February 10, 2023 10:00 AM  
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, 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 HB1350** which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture to establish and implement a GroupGAP food safety training and certification program.

Achieving food safety certification is an important aspect for sustaining Hawaii's ability to provide local food. The GroupGAP program will reduce costs for producers and make GAP certification more accessible to small farmers and ranchers. We support this measure which will appropriate funds for the establishment of the GroupGAP food safety and certification program.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Nicole Galase  
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council  
Managing Director





Email: [communications@ulupono.com](mailto:communications@ulupono.com)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS  
Friday, February 10, 2023 — 10:00 a.m.

**Ulupono Initiative supports HB 1350, Relating to Food Safety.**

Dear Chair Gates and Members of the Committee:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Director of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy and clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

**Ulupono supports HB 1350**, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture to establish and implement a GroupGAP food safety training and certification program.

Ulupono supports food safety certification training across the state for small- to medium-sized famers. According to the 2017 USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Census of Agriculture, of Hawai'i's 7,328 farms statewide, 66%, or 4,868 farms, are between 1–9 acres and 78%, or 5,701 farms, produce less than \$25,000 in sales. Hawai'i's agricultural producer majority is small farmers. Many of these small farmers struggle to enter the marketplace, which is heavily driven by food safety compliance. Working off of such tight profit margins, local farmers are in need of support to meet grocer and food distributor demands such as food safety. Measures such as this seek to provide local producers with an opportunity to earn the necessary certifications in order to provide communities with fresh, Hawai'i-grown products.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata  
Director of Government Affairs

*Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i*





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

February 10, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

**TESTIMONY ON HB 1350**  
RELATING TO FOOD SAFETY

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference  
10:00 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 1350**, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture to establish and implement a GroupGAP food safety training and certification program.

HFB appreciates the support of the legislature in our past efforts to help Hawai'i's farmers achieve food safety certification required by businesses that purchase local produce. Foodborne illnesses can be serious, and we should seek ways to reduce risk. The many criteria associated with food safety certification should not impede safe food. Hawai'i cannot afford to further lose farmers as we strive to increase local food production. We want to incentivize our farmers' ability to continue their operations and provide Hawai'i with abundant safe food. This bill will assist Hawai'i's small farmers with the costs they will incur to become food safety compliant.

USDA GroupGAP is gaining momentum across the nation as a resource for smaller-sized operations that need food safety certification and is the perfect mechanism for Hawai'i's small farmers because it provides a system of shared costs and a supportive network within a group of producers seeking certification. In Hawai'i, many small and mid-scale producers can use food safety certification to gain market access but are still hindered by challenges including individual audit costs and staff to manage the operation's food safety practices, writing a food safety plan, etc. GroupGAP alleviates those burdens by providing technical assistance, in essence, a food safety manager to guide practices and assist with documentation, and because producers share the costs of auditing across all farms in the group.

We support funding to provide training and support for a USDA GroupGAP program to increase the number of food safety-certified farmers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

February 9, 2023

Representative Gates, Kahaloa, Cochran, Lowen, Perruso, Woodson and Ward

Hawai'i's agricultural supply chain is in a precarious position. We rely on imports from the mainland to feed our families. Furthermore, the thousands of small farms in Hawai'i struggle to provide even a subsistence level of output for their local communities as large corporate farms dominate production. Finally, regulations like the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act increase the barriers our small farms must overcome to access institutional markets and scale beyond survival.

Beyond the obvious economic imperative to provide a path to growth for our small farms, Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) certification adds risk management and traceability into this critical pillar of our food supply chain. Implementing GAP reduces the risk of foodborne illness. In cases where contaminated products sicken our community; GAP certified producers are better able to participate in recalls and identify root causes. Furthermore, GAP certification is increasingly a prerequisite for small farms to supply the large, institutional wholesalers that can help them to expand. By expanding this mechanism for Hawai'i's small farms to engage the institutional supply chain, we increase opportunity and improve the safety of the food we consume every day.

HB1350 is a robust win-win for our community. It offers tangible and measurable economic benefits, while improving the supply chain's ability to deliver safe food to our tables. Furthermore, The North Shore Economic Vitality Partnership (North Shore EVP), an established leader in agricultural food safety in Hawai'i, is already leading the charge to assist growing small farms obtain GAP certification. North Shore EVP is launching another GroupGAP cohort and stands ready to partner with the Department of Agriculture to ensure access to this training and certification. In this age of uncertainty, it is imperative that HB1350 is passed, to increase the flexibility and resilience of our small farms to prudently grow their operations.

I appreciate your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Buerge". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

David John Buerge  
Honolulu, Hawai'i



House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

*Friday February 10, 2023, 10:00 am*

SUBJECT: Strong support of HB 1350– RELATING TO FOOD SAFETY

Dear Chair Gates, Vice-Chair Kahaloa, and members of the Committee:

Hawaii Fish Company, established in 1978, is an integrated aquaculture and aquaponics farm on the North Shore of Oahu. We have been participating in the Hawaii GroupGAP food safety training and certification program for the past year. My family, employees, and I strongly support the appropriation of funds to establish a GroupGAP food safety training and certification program in the Department of Agriculture (DOA).

We pursued the GroupGAP certification as a more cost-effective and supported means to obtain food safety certification, with dedicated, well informed food safety specialists for training, to oversee complex recordkeeping requirements, and for periodic audit inspections. Examples of the support provided include helping us write and maintain the proper documentation, providing training opportunities on topics such as proper food handling and storage requirements, teaching and supporting the use of an essential recordkeeping app, and conducting farm visits to ensure we are meeting requirements such as the posting of appropriate signage. This has prepared our farm to meet the FDA/FSMA and USDA recordkeeping and audit requirements.

As FSMA becomes mandatory for most farms and the food supply chain, consumer and market demand for food safety certified produce will become the norm. Market opportunities for farmers without such certification will be greatly reduced. To help meet this increasing demand for food safety certified foods, it is critical that the DOA establish a GroupGAP food safety training and certification program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB 1350.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ronald P. Weidenbach". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Ronald P. Weidenbach

**HB-1350**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 8:47:40 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Yoshito L'Hote	Aina Ho'okupu o Kilauea	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear chair Gates, vice -chair Kahaloa, and members of the committee:

As a farmer and the CEO of an ag center and participant in the Hawaii group Gap, I strongly support the appropriation of funds to establish a GroupGap food safety training and certification program in the DOA.

If the state is serious about addressing local agriculture, they need to put resources to support all the different aspects needed for those farmers to enter the marketplace. currently, so little farmers are GAP certified, and we are supposed to be Fisma certified at this point. So this will provide the right support to empower farmers.



## Food+ Policy Internship 2023

[food@purplemaia.org](mailto:food@purplemaia.org)

February 9, 2023

To: Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

*Subject: HB 1350, Relating To Food Safety*

Aloha Hawai'i State Legislators,

We are writing in support of HB 1350 to implement a Group GAP food safety training and certification program in the DOA. The vast majority of the ~6,000 farms in Hawaii operate on under 10 acres and do not have any food safety certification. This limits the business opportunities for small and mid-sized farms because they can only sell direct to consumers, and it potentially puts the community at risk when they buy local produce from farmers who don't follow safety standards.

To sell produce to grocery stores, restaurants, and institutions like schools, farms must meet certain food safety certifications. The Group GAP program is a game-changer for small farms. It reduces the cost of food safety certification and provides valuable training, technical assistance, and auditing services. A nonprofit called North Shore EVP started offering a group GAP program to Hawaii farmers in 2018, and has seen growing interest from farms as they recognize the opportunity in this certification. Establishing funding for Group GAP in the DOA will increase access to this certification and fill a key puka in Hawaii's food economy.

We **strongly** urge the state to appropriate funds for Group GAP and give farmers the opportunity to provide safe and healthy food to our community.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this bill.

Mahalo,

Mahalo,

Tierra Bartolotti & the Food+ Policy Team

#fixourfoodsystem

---

From the NS EVP's website:

*Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) is an audit certification program created by the USDA and is based on guidelines from the Food and Drug Administration. GAP certification has increasingly become a requirement for retailers, making it difficult for small farmers to be able to sell their goods because of the rigor and cost required of traditional GAP certification.*

*GroupGAP is a new USDA food safety certification option that will increase opportunities for smaller farms to supply GAP-certified produce. This robust certification process addresses many challenges that small farms face in complying with food safety audits and meeting the demands of the retail, food service, and institutional buying community. GroupGAP makes food safety certification accessible for small and middle-sized producers by allowing farmers, food hubs, and other marketing organizations to work together to undergo GAP certification as a group.*

[NS EVP 2022 Report:](#)

*The vast majority of the 5,826 farms growing crops in Hawai'i are smaller than 10 acres and because of low volume and inconsistent production, most of these farms sell directly to consumers at farmers markets, roadside stands or through CSA programs. During the pandemic, Hawai'i lost millions of dollars of direct food aid due to the lack of food safety certification required by suppliers in USDA funded food and nutrition programs. Access to larger, more consistent markets is a significant challenge for small farms, however Hawai'i farmers now have the opportunity to economically attain their USDA Harmonized GAP certification through*



# Food+ Policy Internship 2023

[food@purplemaia.org](mailto:food@purplemaia.org)

*Hawai'i GroupGAP.* Farms that sell over \$25,000 in produce are required to meet food safety standards.

---

**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 2023, the cohort of interns are undergraduate 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.

**HB-1350**

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 3:06:13 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lisa H. Gibson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Group Gap food certification is necessary in order to create a secure food system in Hawaii.  
Please support this bill.



**HB-1350**

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 4:42:48 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
VINCENT KIMURA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

When we think of how our 7,400 farms might be able to sustain, support and grow to provide institutional growing as others have done globally, it comes down to derisking operations and ensuring a baseline of sanitation. Farm share margins tell us that our farmers are working on thin margins and we need to do more. GroupGAP has grown tremendously nationwide and should be supported throughout our state. This is an **absolute no-brainer**, and if you need to do your homework on the whys? I encourage you to do your research before questioning or voting against this. Reference Wallace Center - National Good Food Network program, National Food Hub Network.

Vincent

**HB-1350**

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 4:45:27 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ramsey Brown	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

Friday February 10, 2023, 10:00 a.m.

SUBJECT: Comments on HB 1350– RELATING TO FOOD SAFETY

Dear Chair Gates, Vice-Chair Kahaloa, and members of the Committee:

As a farmer who participated in Hawaii GroupGAP and received USDA Food Safety Certification in 2022, I strongly support the appropriation of funds to establish a GroupGAP food safety training and certification program in the Department of Agriculture.

We pursued certification to be the first of 11 other farmers on our land to be certified. We would like to help the other farmers get certified as well by connecting them with organizations who assisted us. We have begun conversations with large produce distributors now that we have received certification, greatly increasing our market access. The mobile app that we were trained to use to document our food safety activities significantly cuts down on the time and cost required to maintain adequate documentation. Working with our current farmer population is important for food safety and it takes time, from engagement through certification, reinforcing the need for continued support for GroupGAP and farm food safety.

Mahalo.

**HB-1350**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 12:12:41 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dana Keawe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

**HB-1350**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 1:37:21 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Scott Wong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

Friday February 10, 2023, 10:00 a.m.

**SUBJECT: Comments on HB 1350– RELATING TO FOOD SAFETY**

Dear Chair Gates, Vice-Chair Kahaloa, and members of the Committee:

As a farmer who is participating in Hawaii GroupGAP, I strongly support the appropriation of funds to establish a GroupGAP food safety training and certification program in the Department of Agriculture.

Having dedicated and trained individuals or a group walking you through the steps and processes of ensuring you and your farmers are performing safe practices to grow and harvest food is beneficial. Protecting the public, your family and your business is key when dealing with commercial scale food distribution.

This will help save the local farmer time and money knowing the proper steps to fix safety and save the public from food Bourne illnesses.

**HB-1350**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 4:51:34 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Taylor Kellerman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Farmers having access to food safety training and facilitation is paramount for the state to achieve its goals of doubling local food production and increasing our level of food security. Without programs like these, institutional purchasing will not be possible and local growers will have a much narrower pathway to get their good to local communities.

Mahalo for the consideration

Taylor Kellerman

Director of Diversified agriculture and Land Stewardship

Kualoa Ranch Hawaii

**HB-1350**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 9:47:36 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/10/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dean Okimoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

testimony on HB1350Testimony on HB1350

TESTIMONY ON HB 1350

Feb. 10, 2023

Dean Okimoto

98-351 Koauka Lp. #806

Aiea, Hawaii 66701

To the Chairman, Vice-Chair and members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

My name is Dean J. Okimoto and I am a former farmer/owner of Nalo Farms, Inc., for 35 years and former President of the Hawaii State Farm Bureau Federation. I am also currently the Chair of the Hawaii Agriculture Foundation. I also work for Y Hata in trying to get more local products into the Chef Zone location and work with farmers on food safety and agricultural training.

I am writing to you in support of HB1350 which appropriates funds for Group Gap food safety training and certification training for Hawaii. Over the years I have tried to get more farmers aware of food safety and its inevitable introduction into the food system protocols. Now it has gotten to the point of where the buyers of local products, are going to start demanding that farmers have the certification in order for them to buy their products. As buyers of local produce we are looking for the certification so that we can ensure that our customers can have confidence, that we are doing our best to preserve their health and well being. I also believe that this attitude by buyers is becoming more prevalent in the industry, to the point where those that do have food safety certification are being inundated with customers wanting to buy from them. At some point those that do not have the certification will have either a limited, or no market to sell to. When they are faced with this, will they do it or just quit. They may not have a choice, as

when it does become mandatory, for them to sell their products, the line to get trained to do it may be too long and they may have to wait years to go through the necessary training. It is hard enough to get people to go into farming, once we lose them we will not get them back. The other beauty of the Group Gap, is the cost benefits of going through North Shores programs are much cheaper costs, as their program is structured to make it affordable for farmers. It is also much easier to keep records with their system as all information can be input and accessed by an iPhone.

Farmers can NOT even sell to state institutions, healthcare facilities, the large supermarkets , or even the hotels that service our visitors, without food safety certification. So you can demand all you want that the state buy local, but without this training, that mandate is not achievable!!!

If we are to meet the goals of doubling food production by 2030, it is an absolute must that we fund this program for training of farmers in food safety. NorthShore EVP has a good track record of success in training farmers, but they need more trainers and more money to educate all farmers on all islands to ensure we have a safe and viable food system.

I humbly ask for your support in funding this project for the future of sustainability and food security for Hawaii.

Respectfully,

Dean J. Okimoto

TESTIMONY ON HB 1350

Feb. 10, 2023

Dean Okimoto

98-351 Koauka Lp. #806

Aiea, Hawaii 66701

To the Chairman, Vice-Chair and members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

My name is Dean J. Okimoto and I am a former farmer/owner of Nalo Farms, Inc., for 35 years and former President of the Hawaii State Farm Bureau Federation. I am also currently the Chair of the Hawaii Agriculture Foundation. I also work for Y Hata in trying to get more local products into the Chef Zone location and work with farmers on food safety and agricultural training.

I am writing to you in support of HB1350 which appropriates funds for Group Gap food safety training and certification training for Hawaii. Over the years I have tried to get more farmers aware of food safety and its inevitable introduction into the food system protocols. Now it has gotten to the point of where the buyers of local products, are going to start demanding that farmers have the certification in order for them to buy their products. As buyers of local produce we are looking for the certification so that we can ensure that our customers can have confidence, that we are doing our best to preserve their health and well being. I also believe that this attitude by buyers is becoming more prevalent in the industry, to the point where those that do have food safety certification are being inundated with customers wanting to buy from them. At some point those that do not have the certification will have either a limited, or no market to sell to. When they are faced with this, will they do it or just quit. They may not have a choice, as when it does become mandatory, for them to sell their products, the line to get trained to do it may be too long and they may have to wait years to go through the necessary training. It is hard enough to get people to go into farming, once we lose them we will not get them back. The other beauty of the Group Gap, is the cost benefits of going through North Shores programs are much cheaper costs, as their program is structured to make it affordable for farmers. It is also much easier to keep records with their system as all information can be input and accessed by an iPhone.

Farmers can NOT even sell to state institutions, healthcare facilities, the large supermarkets , or even the hotels that service our visitors, without food safety certification. So you can demand all you want that the state buy local, but without this training, that mandate is not achievable!!!

If we are to meet the goals of doubling food production by 2030, it is an absolute must that we fund this program for training of farmers in food safety. NorthShore EVP has a good track record of success in training farmers, but they need more trainers and more money to educate all farmers on all islands to ensure we have a safe and viable food system.

I humbly ask for your support in funding this project for the future of sustainability and food security for Hawaii.

Respectfully,



Dean J. Okimoto

TESTIMONY ON HB 1350

Feb. 10, 2023

Dean Okimoto

98-351 Koauka Lp. #806

Aiea, Hawaii 66701

To the Chairman, Vice-Chair and members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

My name is Dean J. Okimoto and I am a former farmer/owner of Nalo Farms, Inc., for 35 years and former President of the Hawaii State Farm Bureau Federation. I am also currently the Chair of the Hawaii Agriculture Foundation. I also work for Y Hata in trying to get more local products into the Chef Zone location and work with farmers on food safety and agricultural training.

I am writing to you in support of HB1350 which appropriates funds for Group Gap food safety training and certification training for Hawaii. Over the years I have tried to get more farmers aware of food safety and its inevitable introduction into the food system protocols. Now it has gotten to the point of where the buyers of local products, are going to start demanding that farmers have the certification in order for them to buy their products. As buyers of local produce we are looking for the certification so that we can ensure that our customers can have confidence, that we are doing our best to preserve their health and well being. I also believe that this attitude by buyers is becoming more prevalent in the industry, to the point where those that do have food safety certification are being inundated with customers wanting to buy from them. At some point those that do not have the certification will have either a limited, or no market to sell to. When they are faced with this, will they do it or just quit. They may not have a choice, as when it does become mandatory, for them to sell their products, the line to get trained to do it may be too long and they may have to wait years to go through the necessary training. It is hard enough to get people to go into farming, once we lose them we will not get them back. The other beauty of the Group Gap, is the cost benefits of going through North Shores programs are much cheaper costs, as their program is structured to make it affordable for farmers. It is also much easier to keep records with their system as all information can be input and accessed by an iPhone.

Farmers can NOT even sell to state institutions, healthcare facilities, the large supermarkets , or even the hotels that service our visitors, without food safety certification. So you can demand all you want that the state buy local, but without this training, that mandate is not achievable!!!

If we are to meet the goals of doubling food production by 2030, it is an absolute must that we fund this program for training of farmers in food safety. NorthShore EVP has a good track record

of success in training farmers, but they need more trainers and more money to educate all farmers on all islands to ensure we have a safe and viable food system.

I humbly ask for your support in funding this project for the future of sustainability and food security for Hawaii.

Respectfully,

Dean J. Okimoto