

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
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

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2025
9:30 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325 AND VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 496
RELATING TO MAMAKI TEA**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 496. This bill imposes labeling requirements for mamaki tea grown in the State.

The Department of Agriculture (DOA) strongly supports this bill. The growing demand for Hawaiian mamaki tea as a brand should be protected and promoted. This bill provides mamaki tea the protections afforded to other valuable agricultural crops like coffee and macadamia nuts.

DOA respectfully requests that funds be added to this bill to support a Measurement Standards Inspector V SR-19 \$65,000, to support and restore enforcement capability for labeling regulations for Hawaii products such as mamaki tea, coffee, and macadamia nuts. The inspector will inspect and enforce the new laws.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





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

January 29, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON HB 496
RELATING TO MĀMAKI TEA

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
9:30 AM

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice-Chair Kusch, 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 496, which imposes labeling requirements for Māmaki tea grown in the State.

Māmaki, a Hawaiian endemic shrub, is only found in Hawai'i which makes it uniquely Hawaiian. It can be found as a bush, shrub, or tree and its leaves are used to make herbal tea. Māmaki has cultural and medicinal significance and is growing in popularity in local and global markets for its health benefits.

The Māmaki tea industry is fairly new, so we must protect this culturally important agricultural crop from deceptive or misleading labels. Hawai'i's Māmaki growers work hard to cultivate this unique crop, often on small-scale farms that contribute to the local economy and preserve agricultural traditions. Proper labeling requirements ensure that the benefits of Hawai'i's māmaki tea industry go to these dedicated farmers, not misleading competitors.

This measure is an important step in preserving the integrity of Hawai'i's agricultural products, protecting local farmers, and ensuring that consumers can make informed decisions about the origins of the products they purchase.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.