

HAWAII

SUMMER 2021

# RETAIL GROCER

THE MAGAZINE OF THE FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

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### WHAT'S NEXT

RELAUNCHING MADE IN HAWAII FESTIVAL  
'ULU: A STAPLE AND KEY TO FOOD SECURITY  
RECYCLING REIMAGINED  
FOOD MARKETING STRATEGIES

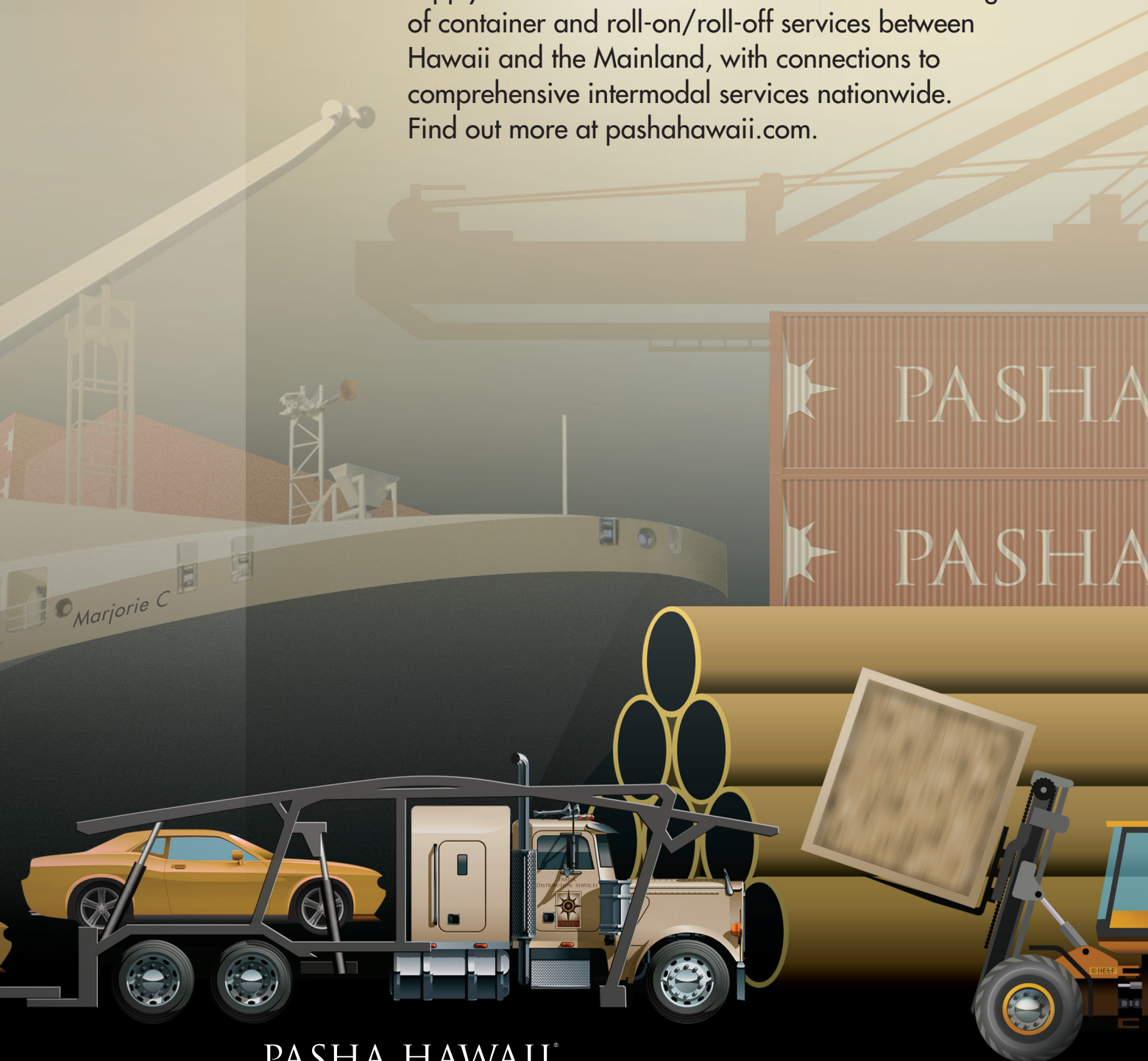
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## Hawai'i RETAIL GROCER

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## CHAIR'S MESSAGE

### Aloha HFIA Team,

HFIA members have always been drivers, creators, and innovators. As we all move into the second half of 2021, our members are leading the way in developing what's next in the food and beverage industry.

Throughout the challenging past year HFIA members have done an amazing job of prioritizing the health and safety of their customers, team members, and communities, and continue to play an integral roll in moving our state past the pandemic. Through it all our businesses have not been waiting around to see what happens, or waiting for the new normal to arrive; they have been adapting, innovating, and creating the future of food.

We're clearly not out of woods yet; the challenges of the pandemic will likely stay with us for some time, and recovery has only just begun. Still, I am excited to be looking ahead to what's next for our association, our industry, our economy, and our state. It has been hard work for our member businesses to overcome the

obstacles of the last year and find ways to continue to serve our customers and our communities under extremely difficult circumstances. I continue to be impressed with how our industry has not just reacted, but also excelled and learned from each new challenge. As we move forward I see our industry using what we've learned to create a food and beverage future for Hawaii that is more adaptable, more resilient, more sustainable, and more locally focused.

I'm thrilled to be part of the HFIA Ohana that is making that happen, and I am honored and humbled by your confidence in me to serve as Chair during these unprecedented times. As we start the next chapter the thing I am most looking forward to is getting to gather with you all again at our upcoming Golf Tournament this May, and our 2021 HFIA Convention "It's the Real Thing!" and the Made in Hawaii Festival this November. I know that when I hand over the Chairmanship to Charlie Gustafson of Tamura Super Market at the Convention our association will be in good



hands. Charlie has been a part of Hawaii's food industry for decades and brings a wealth of experience, leadership, and work ethic to the role. I look forward to working with him, and all of you as we continue to feed our state and create what's next for our industry.

Aloha,

**Joe Carter**  
VP-GM Coca-Cola Bottling  
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# NGA UPDATE

BY NGA GOVERNMENT  
RELATIONS TEAM

2021 ushered in a new Congress, administration, and change in which party holds the majority. Despite the continued challenges brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic and partisan politics, NGA remains focused on advocating for independent grocers and ensuring their priorities are heard on both sides of the aisle.

President Biden began his term by signing several Executive Orders to address the pandemic, including increasing vaccine rollout. Attention quickly turned to an aid package, with debate centered around the scope of the bill, especially spending levels and funding amounts of unemployment benefits. Leaning on the budget reconciliation process, Democrats passed a \$1.9 trillion relief package, which was signed into law in March. The package extended the \$300 per week unemployment benefit through September, expanded the child tax credit for a year, and increased the maximum Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit by 15% through September. A \$15 minimum wage hike was not included. Over 100 NGA members sent letters to their Members of Congress urging them to vote against the one-size-fits-all minimum wage proposal.

As President Biden and Democrats pur-

sue their agenda, the issue of raising the federal minimum wage to \$15 will continue to come up. NGA opposes this level of increase because it would harm small businesses, and reduce food access in disadvantaged communities. The federal minimum wage was always intended to be a floor, not a ceiling. Many states and cities have increased their minimums to levels that align with their economic and cost-of-living conditions. NGA will work with Congress to identify a workable and realistic wage policy that allows independent supermarkets to continue to invest in their companies, employees, and communities.

Since the onset of the pandemic, NGA has been advocating for technical assistance for independent grocers to participate in SNAP online purchasing since it can be challenging for some to set up. The Consolidated Appropriations Act signed in December 2019 provided \$5 million for SNAP online, and the American Rescue Plan signed this March provided \$25 million to promote technological improvements for SNAP online, modernize the Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) system, and support SNAP mobile payment technologies. NGA will continue to support efforts to provide technical assistance to help more grocers offer SNAP online purchasing.

This April, President Biden unveiled the next step in his “Build Back Better” agenda by asking Congress to pass an infrastructure package. The “American Jobs Plan,” lays out more than \$2 trillion in spending on infrastructure and other domestic investments. The administration sees this as

a one-two punch to revitalize the nation’s infrastructure, and as a job creation tool to help the economy rebound.

Biden’s plan includes a list of tax increases to pay for some of the over \$2 trillion. While the American Jobs Plan focuses hikes on the corporate side – raising the corporate rate from 21% to 28%, closing international tax loopholes – the White House has been clear that this will be complemented by a “part two,” likely coming later this spring. This second proposal is expected to include hikes on individuals and pass-through corporations, and increases to the estate tax and lowering thresholds. Main Street businesses could inevitably be hit with a larger tax bill. For many businesses, including grocers, possible tax increases force them to withhold capital instead of investing back into their companies by hiring, renovating, expanding, or upgrading. Taking a partisan tack, many Democrats are calling for the jobs and infrastructure package to use the budget reconciliation process, making a negotiated compromise unlikely.

With our members’ help, NGA will continue working with Congress and the White House to gain support for relief and assistance that enables independent grocers serve their communities. As an industry employing over a million workers on the frontlines of the pandemic, it’s important for Congress to hear from you. **For more information on these issues and how you can make your voice heard in Washington, DC, visit [www.grocerstakeaction.org](http://www.grocerstakeaction.org).**

## RELAUNCHING THE MADE IN HAWAII FESTIVAL

The Made in Hawaii Festival has been a celebration of contemporary local food, art, clothes, crafts, music, and culture for over two and a half decades. Last year, for the first time since the festival’s inception the Made in Hawaii Festival could not take place in person due to COVID-19 restrictions. Rather than miss a year HFIA made the decision to invest in creating an online marketplace to enable our Made in Hawaii Festival vendors to still reach their audience. The online marketplace was a great way to keep vendors and customers connected and keep the Festival alive during the pandemic.

Now that in person events can take place once again, we’re extremely excited to announce the next chapter for the Made in Hawaii Festival with our Presenting Sponsors Mahi Pono and the Central Pacific Bank Foundation and sponsors Hawaiian Airlines and Hawaiian Electric. The 2021 Festival will feature some exciting changes, while carrying on the spirit of sharing Aloha, and providing the only place to find genuinely Made in Hawaii products.

To kick off the new Made in Hawaii Festival the website is being re-launched in August of this year. The new site will be a portal to link shoppers with the online sites of ven-

dors selling authentic Made in Hawaii goods.

The in-person festival this year will be bigger than ever, happening over four days from November 11 – 14. Taking advantage of the long weekend will allow for less congested parking and attendance. This format will also create more time for the Festival’s signature events, demonstrations, and live entertainment from our top local artists.

Along with the new dates our Festival also has an exciting new home. HFIA is very pleased to be partnering with Ala Moana Center as the host of the Festival. Our new venue will be the outside Mauka Ewa parking level 4. Holding the Festival at Ala Moana means ample parking and easy walkability from around Honolulu. The new location also allows for larger walking isles

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9



# A strong agriculture economy is a more resilient one.



PHOTO BY ZACH VILLANUEVA

As our island communities work toward recovery and greater resilience, Ulupono Initiative is actively partnering to invest and advocate in support of locally produced food, renewable energy, clean transportation, and better management of freshwater and waste for Hawai'i's communities

Learn more about our commitment  
at [ulupono.com](https://ulupono.com)



*Committed to a sustainable,  
resilient Hawai'i*





## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

BY LAUREN ZIRBEL

**H** FIA's success at the Legislature this year was due to our strategy of proactively supporting positive legislation and our ongoing work to build and maintain positive working relationships with our Senators and Representatives.

During the 2021 Legislative Session we were happy to host Membership Meetings featuring Representative Aaron Ling Johanson, Chair of the House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce, as well as Senator Rosalyn Baker, Chair of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection. These meetings are a valuable opportunity to touch base with these legislators and listen to their legislative priorities, share our priorities, and have them hear directly from members about their questions and concerns. This dialogue creates positive channels of communication that enable us to more successfully convey our message when we testify and communicate on legislative matters.

One of our main priorities this year was ensuring that a drastic minimum wage increase did not threaten our state's economic recovery. We were proud to partner with the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii and other local business groups on this vital issue. We worked together throughout session to communicate with our Legislators the destabilizing effect that a minimum wage increase would have at this time. Our efforts were successful and an

increase will not happen this year.

Another urgent issue for the 2021 legislative session was of course the unemployment insurance (UI) fund. The fund was not designed to handle the level of unemployment and economic disruption caused by the pandemic. Under the rules in place at the start of the year contributions by employers were set to increase several times over, for many their required contributions would have quadrupled, for others the increase would have been tenfold. We were fortunate to have the support of our legislative leaders and of course our partners in the Hawaii business community to make this a top priority and get changes to the UI rules passed early in session and signed into law on March 2, as Act 01.

This year many businesses also found themselves under threat due to inability to pay rent, and inability to collect rent from commercial tenants. Since last year HFIA had been part of a broad coalition working to enact Commercial Rent Relief using Federal funds. At the State legislature HB1324 made significant progress through the legislature but was not able to pass conference committee. Though the measure did not pass there has been success in bringing attention to this important issue and creating a large group of stakeholders committed to working together on the next phases of solving this problem.

Prior to session we were happy to work closely with Representative Richard Onishi, the Farm Bureau, several HFIA members, and other stakeholders as part of the Food Stream and Agricultural Subcommittee to create a package of bills aimed at improving local food production. This goal has been a priority for many years and this year's measures were aimed at expanding programs that have delivered results, and getting actionable data to enable real progress in the future. Several bills that came out of this working group made significant progress through the legislature and we look forward to picking up this issue again next year.

Another local food program that we've been happily supporting for several years is the Double Up Food Bucks initiative, known as Da Bucks. This program doubles the purchasing power of SNAP dollars when used to purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables. The program has always had a cap of \$10 per customer per

visit and this year we've been advocating for SB512 to remove the limit. Removing the cap is a common sense way to increase SNAP users purchasing power for healthy local foods and keep more SNAP dollars in the local agricultural sector. We were also in strong support of SB348 to help diversify local beverage manufacturing by allowing water to be canned in the state. HFIA supported this measure last year but unfortunately it failed when session was disrupted due to COVID. Both of these measures passed final reading and have been sent to the Governor for signing.

While many things changed during session in 2021, some things stayed the same. As usual, HFIA spent time working to educate our legislators about the dangers of overregulation to our local businesses and economy. We opposed a range of bills that would have placed additional taxes, fees, and/or regulatory burdens on the sales of tobacco and alcohol. Two bills attempted to add additional taxes to sugar sweetened beverages and HFIA opposed. We also opposed attempts at additional bans of consumer goods such as containers, straws, sunscreen and other personal care products. Bills seeking to enact some form of extended producer responsibility were heard and HFIA opposed noting that these programs have not been attempted by any state and that given our size and location the negative impacts for Hawaii consumers could be severe. All of these measures failed to pass. A number of family leave bills were also heard this year. HFIA communicated with our legislators about the need to understand the full range of impacts and unintended consequences that these programs can have and ultimately none were passed.

Each year the volume of bills that fail is always much greater than the number that passes. Working to stop bad legislation from getting enacted is an important part of our mission. This year in particular we're proud to have had so many positive pieces of legislation that we've championed achieve success. Fixing the unemployment fund and making real progress to increase local food production and consumption are significant victories. The success of these measure is the success of our association, our industry and our larger business community working together to solve problems for our state.



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#### RELAUNCHING THE MADE IN HAWAII FESTIVAL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6 for customers. COVID-19 precautions will be in place at the time of the festival as required and may include mask requirements, 6ft social distancing, samples to be distributed in sealed bags, and other measures as necessary.

As always, HFIA Membership provides some important benefits whether you're a Made in Hawaii Festival Vendor or customer. For our HFIA Members who are also Festival Vendors we're pleased to offer a \$100 rebate on your booth fee. All HFIA Members are also eligible to participate in the Made in Hawaii Festival Buyers' Hours.

These pre-opening hours are a special chance for commercial buyers to experience all the festival has to offer and connect with vendors prior to the opening to the public. Keep an eye on the Made in Hawaii Festival Facebook page and check your HFIA Weekly Updates for more information and details as the Festival gets closer.

For over a quarter century HFIA has been proud to produce the Made in Hawaii Festival and this year we're very happy to be bringing it back. The Festival is our state's premier food, art, and craft event, but it's also much more. It's an essential small business incubator, and a showcase of modern and tradition-

**ALA MOANA**  
HAWAII'S CENTER.

al Hawaii culture. Now more than ever we remain committed to ensuring that our Made in Hawaii vendors and customers are able to connect in person and share all that Made in Hawaii Festival has to offer. We're very excited to be working with our Presenting Sponsors Mahi Pono and the Central Pacific Bank Foundation and Sponsors Hawaiian Airlines and Hawaiian Electric to be moving the Made in Hawaii Festival forward and starting the next chapter.

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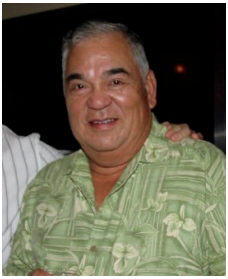
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## TRIBUTE TO GREG GOMES



**T**his past December we said goodbye to Greg Gomes of Advantage Webco Hawaii. Greg was a leader in our industry since founding Webco in 1966. His joy, giving spirit, and dedication to his company and his team will be sorely missed.

Greg built Advantage Webco from scratch into an industry leader that is integral in keeping Hawaii connected. He truly cared about the manufacturers and retailers that he worked with. He created a family company and built enduring relationships that have helped strengthen our industry.

Greg was known for having a big personality and making a big impact, doing things people talked about for years. He was a close friend of Chef Roy Yamaguchi and frequently had events at the original Roy's in Hawaii Kai. One day he came to Roy and asked about moving a company party from his house to the restaurant. The party was for about 90 people and was scheduled for the next day. The

ideal place to have the party would have been in the private dining room at Roy's but it was, at the time, too small for the group. Greg said he could split the party up if necessary, but he also said, "Well I don't want to tell you how to run your business, but what's the use of that wall being there?"

One thing led to another, and after some late-night demo work by Roy and his staff, a little bit of concrete pouring, and some carpets to cover up the rough spots, the wall was gone in time for Greg's party. Inspiring people to knock down walls to keep everyone together says a lot about Greg. Roy recalls, "That's who he was, he wanted everyone to be there and be together, to enjoy it and feel special. He really cherished the moments he could have with his family and friends and the people he worked with, they were his friends."

In addition to his family, his team, and his business Greg was passionate about golf and turned his love for the game into a way to give back. As a sponsor of the St. Louis School Golf Tournament Greg was able to help raise over \$1million for the school. But he didn't stop there, he was inspired by the success of the tournament to create the Webco Foundation which gives to a range of causes. He continued to sponsor several scholarships a year and created a legacy of giving that will continue to enable many young people to get an education at St. Louis School now and in the future.

Greg's grandson Patrick Sato-Gomes, now President, talked about Greg's priorities,

"Greg was happiest taking care of others. He believed it wasn't just his civic duty to give back to as many as he could, but it was his privilege. He was always humbled by those who supported his drive to enable future generations to carry on the Aloha spirit that made Hawaii the only place he ever wanted to be.

He wove that love of the islands and its people into the fabric of Webco. Because of the example that he set our employees have the mentality that it's not enough to be good in business, you need to be an even better corporate citizen and give back to the community. To educate our children to ensure that our local businesses continue to thrive and be around to provide opportunities for our island Ohana. His greatest joy was seeing local business and local residents succeed and perpetuate The Magic of Hawaii."

He surely accomplished that and much more. The happiness, leadership, and team spirit that Greg brought to our industry are an enduring legacy for us all. We at HFIA are very grateful to have had Greg as part of our Ohana, and we join Greg's family, everyone at Advantage Webco, and all his many friends in mourning his loss, and celebrating his great contributions to our industry and our state.

A vibrant, stylized poster for the 2021 HFIA Annual Convention. The background is a tropical beach scene with a blue sky, white clouds, and palm trees. In the foreground, a large glass of beer with ice and a straw is shown with a splash of liquid. The text is overlaid on the image in various fonts and colors.

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ALL PHOTOS THIS PAGE COURTESY 'ULU MANA

In recent years, 'ulu has grown in popularity among residents and local farms are producing more to meet the new demand. As recorded by Dr. Lincoln, in 2018, 3,500 breadfruit trees were planted, 2,000 trees were harvested, and 71,300 pounds of 'ulu were produced for local consumers. 2019 showed growth, with 6,000 trees planted, 2,500 trees harvested, and more than 120,000 pounds of 'ulu produced. Combining this trend, 'ulu's health benefits, and the availability of this local produce, one can understand why there is an 'ulu renaissance in the foodservice and culinary industry.



## BRINGING 'ULU TO THE TABLE

Some key local entities have emerged as strong advocates for an 'ulu renaissance. In 2016, the Hawai'i 'Ulu Cooperative began as a small network of diversified farms growing 'ulu, with co-op members having partial ownership. The organization obtained initial grants from the DOA and Ulupono Initiative to cover operating expenses. The co-op has expanded its membership exponentially and now includes more than 100 'ulu producers on Hawai'i Island and Maui. Today, these farms and growers are producing two-thirds of the state's 'ulu supply. The annual volume of 'ulu produced by co-op members has grown from 17,000 pounds in its first year to nearly 100,000 pounds during the 2020 fiscal year. By 2023, the co-op expects to produce 300,000 pounds of 'ulu as the trees mature.

In response to the pandemic, the Hawai'i 'Ulu Cooperative created a subscription program online to have 'ulu products delivered straight to homes. This summer the co-op is launching a line of frozen local staples for grocery stores, adding bags of minimally processed 'uala (sweet potato), kalo (taro) and squash—alongside its bright green bags of 'ulu ready for freezer shelves.

This increased production means more households are discovering new and innovative ways to serve delicious 'ulu. The

# 'ULU IS AN ISLAND STAPLE AND KEY TO HAWAI'I'S FOOD SECURITY

BY JESSE COOKE

**U**lu, or breadfruit, is gaining in popularity throughout Hawai'i, and it's easy to see why.

'Ulu is low in fat, non-GMO, and an excellent source of fiber, protein and many essential vitamins. According to the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (DOA), 'ulu is a healthier alternative to other starches like potatoes, wheat, and white rice. With relatively easy access to this nutrient-rich superfood, the key to enhancing the islands' food security can often be found in our own backyard.

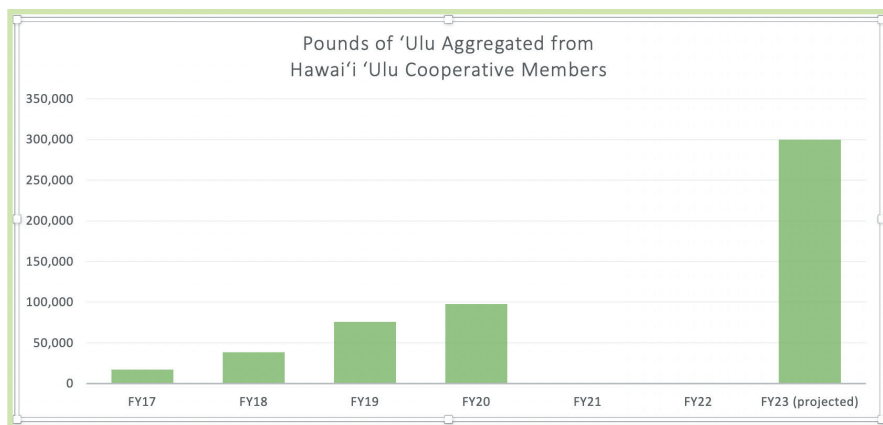
## HOW WE GET OUR FOOD

While 80-90% of the total food bought in grocery stores, served in restaurants, and hiding in the far corners of our refrigerators and pantries is shipped in, this is not necessarily the case with all foods people enjoy in Hawai'i. For example, Hawai'i produces approximately 60% of fresh fruit and seafood be purchased at grocery stores statewide, according to Noa Kekuewa Lincoln, Ph.D., University of Hawai'i assistant professor of Indigenous Crops and Cropping Systems.

However, Hawai'i is the least self-sufficient of all states. Dr. Lincoln estimates that the islands produce less than 1% of carbohydrate consumed locally. This is surprisingly low considering that the Hawai'i is the nation's largest consumer of rice per capita. Moreover, Hawai'i spends nearly \$1 billion annually on carbohydrate-rich foods, based on figures from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.







'Ulu Ambassador program, created in partnership with the co-op and the Chef Hui, a coalition of local cooks and foodservice providers, is working with chefs statewide to create new ways to serve 'ulu and showcase its many uses. In an interview with Hawai'i News Now, 'Ulu Ambassador Chef Kealoha Domingo commented about how people can utilize 'ulu in their daily

meal planning: "It can replace a potato in any dish. It can also be used in things like yogurts, in hummus, in gravy. I use it for thickener. I use it in so many ways."

HFIA Member 'Ulu Mana is working to bring 'ulu to the table in a variety of creative ways. Since its founding in 2017, 'Ulu Mana's mission has been to bring 'ulu to the forefront as a recognized food source by offering unique, high-quality, simple and delicious products made from 'ulu. Notably, 'Ulu Mana has been nationally recognized, with its Garlic Sea Salt 'Ulu Chips earning the 2021 Good Food Award under the snack food category. 'Ulu Mana products, such as 'Ulu Chips and Hawaiian Hummus, can be found at Foodland, Safeway, Down to Earth, Chef Zone, and many mom-and-pop stores throughout the Islands.



## THE CHALLENGE

While both the demand and volume of 'ulu have grown dramatically in recent years, almost three-fourths of the 'ulu trees planted by Hawai'i 'Ulu Cooperative have not yet reached maturity and begun to bear fruit. As a result, and with 'ulu being a seasonal crop, it can be quite a task to produce 'ulu-inspired products year-round to meet the increasing demand statewide.

Adding to this challenge is the short shelf-life of popular 'ulu products, including 'Ulu Chips and Hawaiian Hummus, meaning that residents have to make the most of 'ulu when they can. 'Ulu Mana has been out of the product for months—a clear indication of demand, and the challenges of meeting that demand.

At Ulupono Initiative, we believe the expansion of 'ulu agriculture and showcasing its culinary range will lead to greater consumption of this wonder crop. Indeed, 'ulu can serve a key role in helping Hawai'i to meet its food production goals and, even more importantly, enhance the islands' food security in the future.

--

*Jesse Cooke is the vice president of investments and analytics at Ulupono Initiative. For more information about Ulupono Initiative and its areas of investment, please visit the What We Do page at Ulupono.com.*

## WHAT'S NEXT IN FOOD MARKETING

Some new, and old, marketing trends are poised to grab customer attention.

### Looking Ahead to Nostalgia Marketing

Playing on consumers' nostalgia has already taken off in a big way recently. The unprecedented times of the last year have many longing for the "good old days." Since a quick snap back to pre-pandemic normal seems increasingly unlikely, this trend is proving it will have some staying power. With the future uncertain customers will continue to connect with the comfort and certainty of the past.

### Equity Matters

Consumers, especially millennials and gen z, want to know that the companies they're buying from share their values. Empty virtue signaling is a no-go. However, companies that can use their marketing to show that they not just sup-

port equity but are actively working to advance it will continue to get customer's attention.

### Sustainability is Here to Stay

Early in the pandemic there was some question about how it might impact sustainability as a priority for consumers. Now over a year later it's clear that customers still care deeply about the environmental impact of the products they buy. Having a clear positive eco-friendly message to share with customers will continue to be a key aspect of successful food marketing strategies.

### Transparency Shines Through

For food in particular consumers are looking for transparency in what they buy. More and more customers want to know what exactly is

in their food, where it came from, and how it was made. This means customers are looking for clean labels and marketing that involves high levels of transparency from brands.

### Personalization is Recommended

Ad content that is tailored with personal recommendations for an individual has already proven hugely successful for major brands like Amazon and Netflix. Now consumers are starting to expect this level of tailor-made marketing from more brands. Personalized ads, emails, and other marketing content is an important way to reach shoppers.

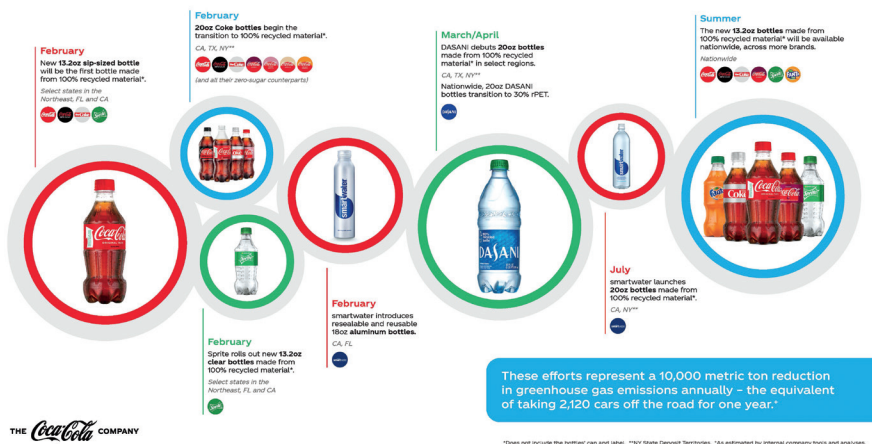
### Shoppable Posts Help Customers Connect

The importance of social media marketing is nothing new, but the next phase is helping customers connect with products even faster. Shoppable posts on platforms like Pinterest and Instagram Checkout mean that there are just a couple clicks between a post and a purchase.



## Working Toward a World Without Waste

The Coca-Cola Company's multi-brand rollout of packaging in the U.S. made from 100% recycled material\* will reduce the company's use of new plastic in North America by 20%, compared to the amount of plastic used to create beverage bottles in 2018.



INFOGRAPHIC COURTESY THE COCA-COLA COMPANY

into new bottles, by the end of 2022.

Combined, these innovations represent a 20% reduction in the company's use of new plastic across its North American portfolio compared to 2018. They will collectively reduce 10,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions annually in the United States – the equivalent of taking 2,120 cars off the road for one year – based on internal company tools and analyses.

The Coca-Cola Company now offers 100% rPET bottles in more than 25 markets, bringing it closer to its World Without Waste goal of making bottles with 50% recycled content by 2030. Announced in 2018, the sustainable packaging platform also includes a goal to collect and recycle the equivalent of a bottle or can for every one the company sells globally by 2030, and to make 100% of its packaging recyclable by 2025.



## PEPSICO RECYCLING SIMPLE ACTS. BIG IMPACT.

PepsiCo Recycling believes that bigger change starts with one bottle, with one person, with one action. Their goal is a recycling rate of every bottle and every can. To achieve this they've created programs to inspire and enable recycling and partnerships to magnify the impact.

### Boosting Infrastructure

PepsiCo is a founding member of the Closed Loop Fund. This important organization provides investment that cities, counties and businesses use to take the steps necessary to move recycling to the next level.

### Providing Access

PepsiCo has joined a coalition of companies through The Recycling Partnership. PepsiCo and the PepsiCo Foundation are proud to be funding partners of The Recycling Partnership. Providing communities, big and small, with the tools and information to recycle more and recycle better, The Recycling Partnership is transforming recycling for good in states, cities and communities across the country.

### Working with Communities and Venues

State level partners and programs help increase the visibility of PepsiCo Recycling in communities across the country. We are proud to work with these dedicated programs that believe in recycling and cleaning

# BEVERAGE BOTTLE RECYCLING REIMAGINED

The future of plastic recycling is starting now.

Plastic is a remarkable resource; it is lightweight, durable, sanitary, and recyclable. These attributes make it the safe and economical choice that many manufacturers rely on for their beverage containers. Customers also choose plastic for these reasons, and for many years consumers in Hawaii and around the U.S. have been in the habit of tossing empty plastic bottles into the recycling bin when they're done. China's decision in 2018 to stop accepting U.S. shipments of mixed materials for recycling put a spotlight on the shortfalls of recycling systems in the USA. Many materials are not recycled as claimed due to a lack of proper collection infrastructure. However, that is not true of the PET plastic used for beverage bottles. PET plastic is 100% recyclable, and is the most recycled plastic in the world. Companies and consumers are embracing plastic's capacity to be remade again and again as needed. Internationally, nationally, and locally HFIA members, in particular those in the beverage industry, are helping to drive this paradigm shift and create the next generation of recyclable plastic bottles and other containers. Perhaps more importantly, they are also creating new recycling systems that are functional and sustainable.



## COCA-COLA CLOSES THE LOOP

In February of this year the Coca-Cola Company debuted a wide range of drinks in 100% recycled PET r(PET) plastic bottles. By creating plastic bottles that are made of 100% recycled material and which can be easily recycled Coca-Cola is taking a big step in advancing what's known as closed loop recycling, where plastic is continually recycled and never becomes waste.

Coca-Cola North America's rPET innovations spans the portfolio and includes multiple brands and packaging sizes:

- Coca-Cola trademark brands rolled out 20-oz. bottles made with 100% rPET in California, New York and Texas starting in February of this year.
- DASANI launched 20-oz. 100% rPET bottles in New York, California and Texas in March.
- smartwater will launch 20-oz. 100% rPET bottles in New York and California in July.
- Sprite will launch a 13.2-oz 100% rPET clear bottle in the Northeast, California and Florida this month. All Sprite packaging will transition to clear packaging, which is easier to be recycled and remade



up our cities and communities.

### Recycling Rally

For K-12 schools PepsiCo's Recycle Rally program offers free resources to help schools start recycling or make an existing program better. Thousands of schools around the country have already benefited from Recycle Rally and ongoing promotions, contests, and prizes from PepsiCo. help keep momentum going.

### Recycling Roadster

Rolling into communities across the country, the Recycling Roadster is a hybrid vehicle that travels around the country to inform people about the importance of recycling and PepsiCo's Performance with Purpose mission.

### Community Recycling

PepsiCo Recycling works with retailers and communities to make recycling more accessible and convenient for everyone, whether close to home or on-the-go.

### Recycling At Events

PepsiCo Recycling partners with professional athletics leagues, teams and venues to provide recycling solutions for fans. PepsiCo Recycling partners with PepsiCo beverages brands to ensure our packaging is recycled during sampling events. Since 2015 we have recycled at 18,000+ sampling events!



### AMERICAN BEVERAGE ASSOCIATION'S EVERY BOTTLE BACK

The American Beverage Association (ABA) points out that plastic bottles are made to be remade. America's beverage companies are carefully designing bottles to be 100% recyclable, even the caps, with a goal of every bottle becoming a new bottle. To that end the ABA has launched a new initiative to get Every Bottle Back. This unprecedented commitment includes:

- Working with World Wildlife Fund through the ReSource: Plastic initiative to measure industry progress on reducing its plastic footprint.
- Partnering with The Recycling Partnership and Closed Loop Partners to improve recycling access, provide education to residents and modernize the recycling infrastructure in communities across the country.
- Increasing awareness about the value of our 100% recyclable plastic bottles.
- Introducing a new voluntary on-pack

message to promote the recyclability of our plastic bottles and caps.

The initiative was launched in 2019 and after just the first year the breakthrough effort by America's leading beverage companies to boost the recycling of plastic bottles saw the initiation of modernization projects in Texas, Oklahoma and Wisconsin and elsewhere. These programs alone will generate an estimated 646 million pounds of new rPET over the next 10 years for remaking into new bottles, according to the ABA.

The investments are among 12 projects that ABA has committed funding for under Every Bottle Back, a 10-year effort by The Coca-Cola Company, Keurig Dr Pepper (KDP) and PepsiCo to marshal the equivalent of nearly a half-billion dollars to reduce the beverage industry's plastic footprint. The initiative will go toward the modernization of recycling infrastructure and to help educate consumers on the value of 100% recyclable plastic bottles in several regions of the USA. The Every Bottle Back initiative complements other sustainability efforts underway by The Coca-Cola Company, PepsiCo, and other U.S. beverage manufacturers that focus on designing for recyclability.



### HAWAII VOLCANIC WATER CHAMPIONS RECYCLING AND UPCYCLING

Sustainability and being Pono has always been a core part of Hawaii Volcanic Water's identity. A part of the company mission statement is a dedication to "becoming an environmental leader in the beverage industry." Hawaii Volcanic Water is only bottled in reusable crystal glass and upcycled plastic bottles (rPET) that are 100% recyclable. Their commitment also extends beyond their own packaging.

Years ago Hawaii Volcanic Water Founders Jason and Channon Donovan first conceived of the idea for an eco-playground, inspired by their son Finn. That inspiration became a reality in 2019 with the opening of the Anaina Hou Community Park in Kilauea. The park playground is made of over 700,000 upcycled milk jugs. This amazing community project's completion was the result of the vision and hard work of the Jason and Channon along with Joan and Bill Porter accepted the Donovan's proposal and donated the land and initial funding for the project. The construction was done by Bill Chase and the pros at [www.playgroundsbyleathers.com](http://www.playgroundsbyleathers.com); the Anaina

Hou team of Thomas Daubert, Jen Luck and Frank Rothschild; and hundreds of community volunteers who shared the vision. The project now stands as an ecofriendly, and much-loved testament to what even hard to recycle plastic beverage containers can become when they're viewed as a potentially ecofriendly building material rather than a disposable waste product.



### HFIA WORKS TOWARDS THE BEST RECYCLING OPTIONS

HFIA's primary role as always is to support our members as they create the next chapter in sustainable recycling here in Hawaii and around the world. We're also working to communicate with our political leaders and policy makers the importance of prioritizing functional recycling as the most responsible and sustainable option, especially for plastic beverage containers. We have long been pushing for the creation of more local recycling options and encouraging the State to reevaluate the H15 program and make improvements.

Recently we've worked with several of our members and other stakeholders to explore the feasibility of closed loop recycling in California as an option for Hawaii beverage containers until local recycling here in the islands can be made a reality. In 2020 we also participated in the Plastic Source Reduction Working Group which was created by Act 254. The group looked at ways that unnecessary plastic usage could be cut down, how to reduce waste and litter in our natural environment, and how to best manage the plastic that we do need after its initial use.

During the 2021 Hawaii Legislative Session we were proud to support Resolutions "urging the Department of Health's Environmental Management Division to ensure that destinations to which the State's recyclable waste is transported for out-of-state processing abide by the environmental standards set out in the Basel Convention." This resolution is an important first step in ensuring that Hawaii's recyclable materials are being treated as a resource and managed in responsible and sustainable ways.

As new, better recycling systems become the norm we look forward to continuing to work with our members, our political leaders, and other stakeholders. We know that HFIA and our member businesses will continue to be at the forefront of creating the future of beverage recycling that meets consumers demands for functionality and sustainability.





PHOTO BY DANIEL SKAF FROM HAWAII VIDEO PRO FOR MEADOW GOLD

## MEADOW GOLD DAIRIES HAWAII, NOW AND TOMORROW

New owner Bahman Sadeghi fills us in on how he came to own this legacy brand and what's next for the company.

BY ALEXIS CHAPMAN

Meadow Gold Dairies Hawaii has been a part of life in Hawaii since 1897 when seven Hawaii dairies combined to form the Dairyman's Association, which would become Meadow Gold in 1959. For generations families across the state have been choosing Meadow Gold milk and other dairy products; Meadow Gold's POG is basically the unofficial state drink; and Lani Moo has been guest star at all kinds of school functions, community events, and even the Made in Hawaii Festival for years. However, in early 2020 this legacy brand almost disappeared from the state. Fortunately, Bahman Sadeghi a Hawaii dairy man with decades of experience stepped in and bought the brand to keep Meadow Gold alive and keep it local. This summer we sat down with Sadeghi to talk story about his history with Meadow Gold, how he came to own this important local brand, and what's next for the company.

### GROWING UP WITH MEADOW GOLD

At the end of March and beginning of April 2020 Meadow Gold's parent company at the time was facing financial difficulties and filed for bankruptcy. The decision was made to sell the company, but with the uncertainty of the pandemic already setting in buyers were not forthcoming. As the deadline approached it seemed likely that rather than being sold the company would have to be closed. Thinking about the loss of Meadow Gold Bahman Sadeghi had the same reaction as so many Hawaii residents, he remembers thinking, "I can't imagine this company will just disappear."

Sadeghi's connection with the company goes back to 1989. At the time he was the owner of a small dairy and had spent the previous several years raising heifers on the Big Island. In those days there were 16 local dairies in Hawaii and Sadeghi sold his milk to Meadow Gold under the quota system. Years later when Meadow Gold was closing their own dairy operations in

Waimanlo Sadeghi bought their animals as well as Meadow Gold's dairy assets in Waimanlo, Haleakala Dairy, and Kauai Dairy. He went from owning the smallest dairy in the state to leading the largest dairy in Hawaii and says that as a dairyman he "grew up with Meadow Gold."

Thirty years after first doing business with Meadow Gold Sadeghi wasn't just shocked at the prospect of the company disappearing, he was inspired to take action. While business deals of this scale usually take months, Sadeghi had just days to make the buy. One morning in early April he learned that there was no buyer for Meadow Gold Dairies Hawaii, but by that afternoon a potential buyer had been lined up. Sadeghi recounts the whirlwind that followed, "On April 8th that buyer stepped aside and I reached out to Dean Foods. I pleaded with them for some time to put together a deal. They gave me one day. I made an offer a day later. On April 11th, they turned it down."

The high value of Meadow Gold's real estate in downtown Honolulu almost prevented the deal from going through. "I offered to buy the company without the Honolulu facility, and we were able to come to an agreement. The whole thing took just four days." The purchase included Meadow Gold's operations on Oahu and Big Island, the processing plant in Hilo, and three distribution centers.

### WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

Of course, after the deal went through the real work began. Sadeghi described the first month after the purchase as chaotic while they searched for a new home on Oahu. They ended up purchasing the old Kings Food facility in Waipahu from fellow HFIA Members Y. Hata. Now one year later Sadeghi and the team at Meadow Gold Dairies Hawaii are looking toward the future and getting ready to start the exciting next phases.

While there are changes ahead, there will also be continuity in some important areas. Meadow Gold Dairies Hawaii has always been a community focused organization and they've been delivering on that commitment in a big way since the change in ownership. As youth sports and other events have started to return to the islands, Lani Moo and the Meadow Gold team handing out healthy drinks has become a frequent site again. This spring Meadow Gold also helped get books into the hands of local kids by sponsoring



**Left: Artist Mark Visaya of The Helm with Meadow Gold Truck he painted as apt of their partnership with Pow!Wow!; Below, left: Milk at plant; Below, right: Workers at a POG giveaway**

and donating 1000 books to First Book. Meadow Gold is also encouraging learning by sponsoring care of Lani Moo the cow at the Honolulu Zoo, and sponsoring the Kids' Café at the Children's Discovery Center. For our young local athletes Meadow Gold works with UH to provide nutrition to UH team players, and they continuing to sponsor the uniform subsidy for the American Youth Soccer League.

Of course, Meadow Gold is not just for kids, they have been helping promote COVID-19 vaccinations by doing POG giveaways at vaccination events, and HFIA is very pleased that they will be one of our Tent Sponsors for the May 14 Golf Tournament. Art enthusiasts will appreciate Meadow Gold's partnership with Pow!

Wow! to have their trucks painted by local artists from around the state. These initiatives are what makes this company more than just a business or a brand, but a part of life in Hawaii.

### WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

The future for Meadow Gold is also going to be locally focused in some exciting ways. While the importance of locally made food is widely recognized in Hawaii, it can be hard to nail down the best ways to make significant increases in the amount of local food we produce and consume. Sadeghi says that investing is key to increasing local food manufacturing, "It can be seen as a chicken and egg problem, but the truth is you have to in-

vest first. We need investment in technology, equipment, and upgrades. The State can facilitate and entice investment with things like tax credits or deferments. Increasing self-sufficiency is a net gain for the state."

Specifically, Meadow Gold will be investing in making new plant-based beverages in the near future. While oat, soy, almond and other nut milks have been widely available for some time, the goal for Meadow Gold is to make these products in Hawaii using locally grown ingredients. "Making locally manufactured food with locally grown ingredients just makes more sense," Sadeghi explained. In this way Meadow Gold's product diversification will also lead to important agricultural diversification in Hawaii. He plans to work closely with partners in the agricultural sector to support agricultural expansion and provide value for local consumers. Someday soon consumers can look for locally made Meadow Gold almond milk and more plant-based beverages made from Hawaii grown soy, oats, cashews, hemp, and mac nuts.

Local food is always a hot topic of conversation in Hawaii. Over the past year the importance of local food manufacturers as job providers and local economic drivers has become clearer than ever. We've also seen the challenges that local businesses face. As was the case with Love's Bakery earlier this year, sometimes these challenges can be too much for even long standing and much-loved brands. Sadeghi pinpointed some of the biggest obstacles that Hawaii companies face, "The lack of economy of scale, the logistical challenges of being so remote, and the high costs of doing business in Hawaii make it hard." As daunting as these issues can be to overcome Meadow Gold is now clearly on a path to not just survive in Hawaii, but to thrive. Sadeghi concluded, "Meadow Gold is still here, we are still local. We're continuing our traditions and we're looking to grow." For long standing customers and local food enthusiasts, that is great news, and a great reason to get excited about what's next for Meadow Gold.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MEADOW GOLD





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## NEW MEMBERS

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**HFIA is very pleased to welcome several new members!**



### HAWAII COFFEE COMPANY

Welcome to Hawaii Coffee Company!

In Hawaii, Ohana means family, including the extended sense. We are Ohana; a family of sister companies. Together by choice, working with one shared purpose; to delight you with our exquisite coffee and tea. Today, we are the largest roaster of Kona Coffee in the world and Hawaii's leading supplier of coffee to the Island's hotels, restaurants and retail stores. We are a taste of Hawaii. Aloha!



### CBRE

CBRE is the leading full-service commercial real estate company in Hawaii. Locally CBRE was responsible for 464 lease and sales transactions valued at over \$524 million in 2019 and currently manages 9.6 million square feet of commercial properties. CBRE

Hawaii employs a staff of 72 people in 8 offices (including on-site management offices) on three of the four major islands of Oahu, Maui and Kauai. Its spectrum of services includes Advisory & Transaction Services for office, retail and industrial properties, Capital Markets, Property Management, CBRE Hotels, Valuation & Advisory Services, Assessment & Consulting Services, Debt & Structured Finance, and Project Management. CBRE in Hawaii is responsible for leasing more than 50% of the Class A office buildings in downtown Honolulu and participating in some of the Island's largest sales.

## HONBLUE

### HONBLUE

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In 1967, HONBLUE got its start as a small, local blueprinter with a modest storefront in Honolulu's thriving urban core. As Honolulu has continued to grow and change, so have we, keeping ahead of technological trends in printing, while having a hand in some of the state's largest projects.

We are a family business, locally owned and operated, and an active participant in our island community. Our experience and dedication to serve our clients is apparent in every project we take on. We take pride in our work and focus on the details to ensure you receive the best service and printed product possible.



### COMMODITY FORWARDERS INC

Commodity Forwarders specializes in the transportation and distribution of perishable products through our people, network and technology. Fresh or frozen, seafood, meat, flowers, foodstuffs or produce; your CFI team will expertly handle for air, ocean, truck and rail transportation. From our fourteen USA based offices CFI's perishable network relationships in Canada, Mexico, Europe, Latin America, South Pacific, Asia and the Middle East, CFI is well positioned to serve your temperature sensitive cargo needs.



### FRESH ALOHA DIRECT

Fresh Aloha Direct (FAD) is a joint venture that two family-run local businesses with decades of experience providing fresh, locally grown produce and globally sourced food in Hawaii.

As a subsidiary of Aloun Farms, FAD is a fully integrated, sustainable farm-to-retail operation that provides world-class, valued-added, quality-controlled farming, import, distribution, merchandising and marketing support to local farmers, global suppliers and Hawaii wholesalers and retailers.

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## HONOLULU DISPOSABLE FOOD WARE ORDINANCE

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**T**he Disposable Food Ware Ordinance or DFWO is Honolulu Ordinance 19-30 and began as Bill 40 in 2019. The DFWO is being administered and enforced by the Honolulu Department of Environmental Services. It has two phases with two implementation dates. Phase 1 requires food vendors to only provide fossil fuel-free utensils made of bioplastic, paper, or other renewable materials instead of petroleum plastic utensils, and curtail the use of petroleum plastic takeout bags. It also requires utensils to be provided only on request or positive response from a customer. This

phase was initially scheduled to take effect on January 1, 2021, however due to the COVID-19 pandemic and issues with the administrative hearings process the implementation date was pushed back to April 1, 2021. This phase of the ordinance is now in effect and all Honolulu businesses should be in compliance.

Phase 2 of the ordinance is scheduled to take effect on January 1, 2022 and mandates that:

- No food vendor shall sell, serve, or provide prepared food in polystyrene foam

food ware or disposable plastic food ware to customers.

- No businesses shall sell polystyrene foam food ware, disposable plastic service ware, or disposable plastic food ware.

HFIA worked with the Hawaii Restaurant Association (HRA), the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii, and Retail Merchants of Hawaii to submit an application for an industry exemption, as allowed by the ordinance. The application requested a two-year exemption for both phases of the ordinance.

At the time of this writing the application has not yet been approved or denied. Updates on the outcome of the application will be provided in the Weekly Update. Members with questions on the ordinance or related issues can reach out to us at [info@HawaiiFood.com](mailto:info@HawaiiFood.com)



## MEMBER UPDATES



### HAWAIIAN KINE TRADING CO. NEW LINE

Hawaiian Kine Trading Co. is pleased to be offering a new line of eco friendly products. The line includes a home and marine compostable straw made from PHA which is compliant with both the Honolulu Disposable Food Ware Ordinance and Maui County Bill 52. Contact Sean Stewart for more information [info@hawaiiankinetrading.com](mailto:info@hawaiiankinetrading.com) 808 589 7866.



### HAWAII FOODBANK WELCOMES AMY MILLER MARVIN

Following a nationwide search, the Foodbank is excited to announce Amy Miller Marvin as Hawaii Foodbank's new president and CEO effective May 1. She brings to the position more than two decades of experience specializing in operations, financial management and fund development.

### AMERICAN SAVINGS BANK EARNS GREAT PLACE TO WORK® CERTIFICATION

This March American Savings Bank was officially certified a Great Place to Work®, a designation awarded to the top companies around the world.

ASB joins an elite group of certified companies globally that have worked

hard to create an excellent workplace culture for its teammates. The certification process includes a company-wide survey and written nomination. Highlights from the survey results include:

- 90% of teammates say ASB is a great place to work (compared to 59% at a typical U.S.-based company)
- 94% of teammates say that when you join ASB, you are made to feel welcome
- 94% of teammates feel they are treated fairly, regardless of their gender
- 95% of teammates feel good about the ways ASB contributes to the community



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Photo: Kalohi Channel by William Renio





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BY LAUREN ZIRBEL

The first half of 2021 has been a productive time for HFIA and our members and we're very excited about what's next for our association. At the State Legislature this year has been one of the most successful ever for HFIA, more details can be found in the Legislative Update article on page 8.

At time of this writing, we are getting ready for our first in person event of 2021, the May 14 Golf Tournament! This Golf Tournament is especially exciting for a couple reasons. Being in Tier 3 has allowed us to move back to our preferred shotgun start format which creates a fun atmosphere on the course. This tournament is also special because so many of our members have stepped up in a big way and taken the initiative to provide food and drink tents around the course. This is a great new addition to the tournament and we're so happy to be able to offer so many wonderful refreshments to our golfers.

As always, I want to give a huge thank you Mike Kaya, HFIA's one and only D.O.G. (Director Of Golf), now more than ever we appreciate all the hard work that you do to enable us to get together for our golf tournaments. I'd also like to give a huge thank you to Justin Yoshino of Market Advantage who

seamlessly coordinated all our food and drink tents and made this great new part of the May 2021 Golf Tournament possible. And of course, very special thank you to all our Tent Sponsors and Tournament Sponsors, we are so grateful for your support!

We're also already getting excited for the next events we have on the calendar, the Made in Hawaii Festival, 2021 HFIA Convention "It's the Real Thing," November 5-7 and the Made in Hawaii Festival November 11-14. More about everything new with the Made in Hawaii Festival can be found on page 6.

While I of course look forward to the Convention every year, this year is incredibly meaningful. I'm so grateful that we've had the technology to be able to connect digitally over the past year, but it really isn't the same as gathering together in person. After seeing so many of you only in screens, and only "meeting" virtually it's great to talk about Convention and let everyone know that it's not another online event, "It's the Real Thing." I know Convention this year will be a great chance for everyone in our industry to reconnect with each other, to reflect on the unprecedented times we've been through, and to set our goals for where we want our association and our industry to go next.



We've always known how vital our food and beverage businesses are to Hawaii, and through all the challenges of the last year we've shown what a positive influence our industry is. For me some of the most important takeaways of dealing with the pandemic have been how HFIA created a space for collaboration and communication for our industry. As Hawaii continues to rebuild our economy, I know we will play a vital role. I think we are better equipped than ever to make informed and thoughtful decisions about how to make sure that our economy comes back stronger, more diversified, and more locally focused. I'm proud to know that all our member businesses and our association will play an important role in writing that next chapter for our state.

**HFIA**  
HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

**BECOME A MEMBER**

**THIS IS A CALL TO ACTION!**

JOIN HFIA ONLINE TODAY!  
[HAWAIIFOOD.COM/MEMBERSHIP](http://HAWAIIFOOD.COM/MEMBERSHIP)

The graphic features a dark background with yellow and orange geometric shapes, including triangles and circles, and several pineapple illustrations. The HFIA logo is in the top left corner.

## WHY JOIN?

Because, HFIA is....



### Your Liaison Between Government and Industry.

Many of the 2-3K bills proposed by the Hawaii State Legislature each year could significantly affect our industry. Members receive timely legislative updates each week, and we make sure your voice is heard. HFIA has a long track record of successful advocacy on priority policy issues. This is why our members find HFIA so valuable to their company.



### Your Professional Networking Hub

HFIA hosts several low-cost membership events throughout the year. Our quarterly & annual events provide valuable education & resources, while facilitating strong industry connections that help members grow their business. As an added bonus, our events are downright fun.

That's why HFIA members share a unique connection and camaraderie that makes this association unlike any other in the state!

# THANK YOU!

TO EVERY GROCER, RETAILER, CLUB, CONVENIENCE STORE, RESTAURANT, FARMER,  
MANUFACTURER, BAKER, RANCHER, PROCESSOR, BUTCHER, DISTRIBUTOR,  
SHIPPER, CLERK, CASHIER, STOCKER, RECEIVER, BAGGER, WAREHOUSE WORKER,  
WHOLESALE, DELIVERY DRIVER, CART SANITIZER, DELI WORKER, MERCHANDISER,  
PRODUCE SPECIALIST, CHEF, WAITER, DISHWASHER, JANITOR, BUYER, CUSTOMER  
SERVICE AGENT, HR PROFESSIONAL, MAINTENANCE WORKER, AND IN-HOUSE HEALTH  
TEAMS THAT WORKED TIRELESSLY TO KEEP US AS SAFE AS POSSIBLE - THANK YOU!

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YOUR COURAGE, DEDICATION, AND PROFESSIONALISM,  
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