

HAWAII

WINTER 2022

RETAIL GROCER

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

LOCAL VALUE-ADDED
FRUIT PRODUCTS

MEMBER NEWS

2022 HFIA
CONVENTION
HIGHLIGHTS



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12



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HAWAII RETAIL GROCER

Hawaii Retail Grocer is a quarterly publication of the Hawaii Food Industry Association

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PUBLISHING AND PRINTING PARTNER Trade Media Hui



Cover photo by Anthony Consillio Cover Design by Dustin Koda of Trade Media Hui

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20



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DEPARTMENTS

Chair's Message6
Legislative Update8
NGA Update10
New Member Benefit17
Member News18
The Last Word26

FEATURES

Made in Hawaii Festival12
Sweet Success16
2022 HFIA Convention20

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CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Aloha HFIA Team,

First of all I'd like to thank all our Convention Sponsors, Product Donors, and Attendees who made the 50th Anniversary Convention so special. It was an honor to accept the gavel from my predecessor Charlie Gustafson, and for us all to welcome Derek Kurisu into his much deserved place in HFIA's Hall of Fame. One of the things that makes our Convention, and our association great is that it connects all different types of food industry companies. At the Convention we have small local businesses sponsoring and attending alongside major multinational brands. Bringing together all the different business and people that make up our industry is one of the things that HFIA does best.

This November was the 28th Annual Made in Hawaii Festival, produced by HFIA. The Made in Hawaii Festival is unique in so

many ways and something that really sets it apart is the Buyers Hours. Creating this dedicated space and time for retailers and other industry buyers and professionals to connect directly with local manufacturers is part of why the Festival is such a successful small business incubator. I've attended the Festival for many years, but this year as Chair of HFIA it was very special to experience this inspiring showcase of local products. Our state is unique, and our Made in Hawaii Products reflect all the things that make Hawaii so special.

But we all know doing business here can be challenging, having strong connections in our industry and our business community makes it easier. As we finish another year that was filled with some unexpected challenges, it's an opportunity to look ahead. I'm very grateful to HFIA for bringing us all together in so many different ways, for making connections, and helping to keep our industry strong.



Mahalo,

Eddie Asato
HFIA Chairman
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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

BY LAUREN ZIRBEL

During our Convention Membership Meeting attendees participated in an interactive exercise to help set the course for HFIA's future. The activity involved answering questions and getting member feedback to allow HFIA to maximize our positive impact in our four main activities: Advocacy, Networking, Education, and Industry and Community Relations.

This exercise produced valuable information that has allowed us to fine tune our 2023 Legislative Platform to make sure it is aligned with the specific needs of our members. Members also generated insightful feedback on how HFIA can best serve our industry through the Networking, Education, and Industry and Community Relations. Additional information on these areas will be discussed in the Last Word. To see full results of the exercise email Info@HawaiiFood.com.

IMPROVING ENERGY SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE IN HAWAII'S FOOD INDUSTRY

Members were asked, "How would state incentivized solar and batteries positively impact your business, and/or the food industry in Hawaii? What is the main obstacle preventing

you from transitioning to renewable energy for your business?"

Overwhelming the answer that received the most votes was, "Simplify permit zoning approval processing." This reply received more than 6 times as many votes as "Money, credits, incentives."

These results have created a great opportunity for HFIA to adjust one of our bills for direct legislative action in 2023. Rather than pushing legislation that will ask for additional incentives, we are planning legislation to make the solar and battery storage permitting process more efficient and effective for our industry. We believe that one option may be for the State to allow for solar and battery installation based on contractor certification, rather than having to go through the entire permitting process. We are discussing this and other potential solutions to the problem with legislators and other stakeholders and will keep members up to date via the Weekly Update.

JOBS TAX CREDITS

Members were asked, "In Arizona the Quality Jobs tax credit offers up to \$9,000 of Arizona income or premium tax credits spread over a three-year period for each net new qualifying job (\$3,000 per year). How would a similar new hire tax credit positively impact your business, and/or the food industry in Hawaii?"

The answer with the most votes was, "incentivizes job creation and allow more money to be deployed into wages and benefits." Other feedback noted that this program "could help offset training costs, increase competitive wages, create improved customer service and new positions beneficial to company from additional staffing."


In addition to these benefits, we believe that a program like this in Hawaii could help alleviate some of the dire and ongoing staffing shortages being faced by our essential industries. HFIA is currently working to create legislation that would launch a version of this program tailored to Hawaii businesses and employees.

ELIMINATING GROCERIES FROM THE GET

During our interactive Membership Meeting activity we also asked members, "How would removing taxes on groceries and medication positively impact your business, and/or the food industry in Hawaii? What suggestions do you have for raising State revenue to offset the projected \$260 million loss from removing GET from groceries?"


The majority of those present voted in agreement with the answer, "Legalization of restricted categories, lottery, marijuana, gaming." The loss of money for the State has always been

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



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The late fall winter holidays are one of the busiest times for grocers, bringing a rush of shoppers eager to please family and friends at their seasonal gatherings.

The traditional hectic holiday pace would be a whirlwind for grocers even without the added pressures of inflation and supply chain challenges being experienced across the industry. But many grocery operators are hard pressed to step away from their stores for any amount of time. Still, it's important to occasionally get away from your business to work on your business, and there's no better place for independent community grocers to do that than The NGA Show.

Held during the year's first quarter, The NGA Show is the largest annual gathering of independent grocery retailers and wholesalers, food retail industry executives, manufacturers and suppliers.

Running Feb. 26-28, 2023, at the Caesars Forum Convention Center in Las Vegas, the show features more than 40 sessions and workshops designed to bring you and your team up to date on the latest trends and best practices in the food retail industry and equip them with strategies to increase profits and drive the bot-

tom line. Education tracks encompass digital commerce, marketing, merchandising, operations, people development and technology.

Additionally, the show's expo floor offers more than 300 exhibits representing a diverse range of product categories to keep you and your team updated on innovations, solutions and new products to drive customer satisfaction and prosper in a dynamic post-pandemic marketplace.

And this coming year, the show will continue the momentum of the new Women Grocers of America Executive Female Leaders (EXFL) Network, which held its inaugural meeting this fall in Washington, D.C.

Created by Women Grocers of America and supported through the NGA Foundation, this unique professional development group's participants gathered for a day and a half of interactive leadership development, analysis of industry trends and networking. It featured a powerful lineup of speakers, including a female executive panel with Katie Hotze, founder and CEO of Grocery Shopii; Amy Nemet-schek, president and CEO of Certco Inc.; and Stephanie Becker, senior vice president, general counsel and chief legal officer for Associ-

ated Wholesale Grocers.

I'm truly impressed by the response and support that EXFL has received so far. Part of the mission of NGA and the NGA Foundation is to enhance the career development of leadership throughout the industry, and the EXFL Network provides the opportunity for women in the retail, wholesale, supplier, manufacturer and vendor communities to meet, share ideas and experiences, and face complex issues in independent grocery. Under the leadership of WGA President Kristin Popp, executive vice president of Woodman's Food Markets, the group provides a space where women leaders can learn together, discuss industry trends, solve problems, connect and strengthen our industry.

WGA rolls on into The NGA Show with a luncheon and reception on the opening day of the show (Sunday, Feb. 26), the annual presentation of its Woman of the Year award, and other network activities yet to be announced.

Meanwhile, the show's opening keynote kicks off on Sunday afternoon with a message of dedication and commitment from world-class blind adventurer Erik Weihenmayer, whose story is a stunning example of perseverance, commitment to one's goals and a passion for life.

Despite losing his vision at age 14, Weihenmayer is an accomplished climber, paraglider, skier and kayaker who never allows blindness to interfere with his passion for pursuing an exhilarating and fulfilling life. The opening keynote session is sponsored by The Kraft Heinz Company, a long-time supporter of NGA and the independent supermarket industry.

In addition to the education session and exhibit hall, The NGA Show will honor the winners of NGA's annual Creative Choice marketing and merchandising awards, as well as crown this year's winner of the Best Bagger Championship.

For more information and to register for The NGA Show, visit www.theNGAshow.com.

More details about WGA and the EXFL Network can be found at www.nationalgrocers.org/foundation/

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

the main obstacle for passage of this measure and this year it looks like legalization of marijuana may be in a good position to pass which would help replace some of the lost revenue. Given that inflation has increased the price of all goods, and the fact that the government is still taking the same % on higher priced goods, this will also help offset losses resulting from not taxing essential items such as groceries (a practice very few other states engage in). Additionally, The State stands to reap a massive haul from Transient Accommodation Tax (TAT) revenue, with substantially more now going to

the State this year.

Newly elected Governor Josh Green has stated his support for eliminating the General Excise Tax (GET) from groceries and over the counter medications. This puts legislation to un-tax groceries in a more favorable position to pass than ever before. We're looking forward to working with a broad group of stakeholders to advance this beneficial initiative measure.

We recognize that this measure faces an uphill battle and strong opponents. Unfortunately, some at our state legislature still believe that taking money out of Hawaii families' grocery budgets is an acceptable way to fund

the government and will oppose eliminating this regressive tax.

When session starts in January we will keep members updated in the Weekly Update on all these bills, in addition to the bills which we are tracking. We encourage all members to submit testimony in support of these measures when they are heard. Throughout session we will be available to answer member questions and help members take action on these or other issues that may impact you and your business. For questions or additional information please reach out to us at Info@HawaiiFood.com.

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ANTHONY CONSILLIO**

The 2022 Made in Hawaii Festival allowed us to bring back some of the most festive aspects of the event that we'd all been missing for the last several years. Once again Derek Kurisu was able to host the famous Live Made in Hawaii Festival Cooking demonstrations featuring acclaimed local chefs. We were able to bring back sampling allowing our many food vendors to share their delicious products with customers. 2022 marked the return of live music to the Made in Hawaii Festival. The Finals for the 2022 Kani Ka Pila Grille 15th Annual Talent Search were held during the Festival.

On behalf of HFIA, all our Made in Hawaii vendors and attendees we'd like to extend our gratitude to our Sponsors who made this event possible. Our presenting sponsor Mahi Pono has a hands on understanding of why growing and making local is so important for our state's economy and we are so grateful for their strong support of the Festival and it's mission. We were very pleased to once again work with the Made in Hawaii Festival's Official Airline, Hawaiian Airlines, Official Bank Central Pacific Bank, and Host Hotel Ala Moana Hotel. We'd also like to thank our Ohana Sponsors HTDC and Hawaiian Electric, and our Aloha Sponsors HI Life, HMSA, Matson, Hawaii Volcanic Water, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, The Odom Corporation, niu Health, and EZ Outdoor AC.

The Made in Hawaii Festival is unlike any other event anywhere. The scope and scale of the Festival, the blend of live entertainment and shopping, the economic connection and impact for Hawaii businesses, the genuinely local products, and the local culture that it celebrates all make the Made in Hawaii Festival unique. HFIA is proud to produce this amazing event, and we look forward to continuing to improve and evolve the Made in Hawaii Festival for our State.







PHOTO: ANTHONY CONSILIO



SWEET SUCCESS

LOCAL VALUE-ADDED FRUIT PRODUCTS ARE PROSPERING

BY ALEXIS CHAPMAN

Hawaii fruit products include favorites like juice, jelly, and syrups, as well as more unexpected offerings such as hot sauce, cookies, ciders, mustard, purees, and more. These value-added products manufactured with Hawaii produce are not only delicious, they're also an important example of how Hawaii's economy and food systems can become more self-sufficient. As Founder and Co-owner of Maui Fruit Jewels Lin Ter Host points out, "value-added product manufacturing is the link between local farms and local stores." And that

link creates local jobs and local business opportunities along the way.

Unique Local Flavors

Maui Fruit Jewels makes four lines using locally grown fruits: Exotic Fruit Jellies, Hawaii Fruit Paste, Hawaii Fruit Puree, and Shortbread with Hawaii Fruits. Lin explains why they choose Hawaii grown fruits, "Our value-added products have such intense, authentic fruit flavors because we source the prime, ripened fruits locally." The local fruit and produce they

use includes lilikoi, mango, guava, pineapple, banana, noni, orange, papaya, star fruit, lavender, macadamia nuts, turmeric, jalapeño, and Hawaiian chili peppers. Maui Fruit Jewels and other Hawaii manufacturers find success because they know how to make the most of those intense local flavors. Highlighting Hawaii's fruits means creating unique pairings, crafting fresh new products, and building unexpected flavor profiles.

Thirty years ago the idea of passion fruit habanero mustard might have raised some eye-

brows, but today many Hawaii shoppers know that as just one of the delicious products by Auntie Lili'oi. The company began on Kauai in 1990, founded by the husband and wife team Elpidio "Tony" Cardenas and Lori Cardenas. It's now owned by another husband and wife team, Melissa McFerrin Warrack and James Warrack. Over the years the company's daring combinations and expert use of local fruits has gotten attention not just locally, but nationally. They've received awards and recognition for product innovation and their mustards have received 14 medals and a Grand Champion trophy in the annual World Wide Mustard Competition, including a Bronze Medal in 2022 for the Habanero Mustard. The fact that a product made in Waimea Town Kauai can successfully compete with internationally recognized brands in this global competition is a testament to quality and value of Hawaii products made with local fruits.

Kasey Sulheim and Shaun Peck of Paradise Ciders also believe in the importance of showcasing local fruits in their products. They started the company, Hawaii's first hard cider company, several years ago after noticing that there were no ciders on the market that utilized Hawaii fruits. Cider is an ideal way to capture the singular flavors of fruits, and Paradise Ciders uses local lili'oi, dragon fruit, ginger, pineapple, guava, mango, starfruit, calamansi, orange, grapefruit, mint, and sugar cane just to name a few. Certain flavors, like Prickly Paradise can only be made seasonally in order to capture delicate flavors at their peak. With reliable supplies of mangoes and pineapples their Mango Daze and Pineapple Cruiser ciders can be brewed year-round.

Creative Sourcing

Sourcing fruits in bulk can be a big challenge for Hawaii manufacturers. While some fruit ingredients like Hawaii grown Dole pineapples are reliably available and Mahi Pono is making local citrus much more accessible, it can be hard to find other more specialized agricultural products in large quantities.

Humble Food Design makes Mr. Guava Lava chili pepper water and Hot Shot lili'oi chili pepper water. It's not only the local fruits, but also using exclusively Hawaiian chili peppers that gives these products their distinctive flavors. But finding the pounds and pounds of Hawaiian Chili Peppers needed to manufacture chili pepper water can be challenging. Rather than buying in bulk from one source, Humble Food Design works with several growers on Oahu, Molokai, and Big Island. Owner Robert Kekoa doesn't see this as a downside, "For us, being able to help other small local business is one of the benefits of using local ingredients."

Paradise Ciders has also learned to think outside the box when it comes to sourcing ingredients, and made some friends along the way. Kasey explains that they get their fruit from a growers big and small, "We've sourced from big companies like Dole who fresh press our pineapple juice for us the same day we order it, but also from small sources like getting a bag of calamansi from a customer's tree in their yard. We have sourced so many ingredients just by making friends with people that come to fill up their growlers each week. We chat about cider recipe ideas and next thing you know they come back with ten pounds of mint or they're inviting us over to their house to raid their lychee tree."

The Local Economy

Finding reliable supplies of specialty agricultural products is not easy but the local manufacturers who make it work are not just benefiting their own businesses; by aggregating from multiple sources they are giving small scale growers a stable market. Creating products with local fruit creates manufacturing jobs in Hawaii and supports agricultural businesses and jobs in the state. This contributes to a more diverse economy for the state.

These companies and dozens of others manufacturing in Hawaii with local produce have all been involved in the Made in Hawaii Festival. The Festival helps connect businesses that are manufacturing in Hawaii with consumers, and with the business community including suppliers, distributors, and retailers. When these products are sold to local consumers at the Made in Hawaii Festival or in local stores it means Hawaii's food systems become more self-sufficient and resilient. There can be even more added layers of economic benefit. Auntie Lili'oi products are sold to other local businesses such as bakers and popsicle makers who make local value-added products of their own.

The success of companies like Maui Fruit Jewels, Humble Food Design, Auntie Lili'oi, and Paradise Ciders that are different sizes, ages, and in different product categories demonstrates conclusively that there is a market for Hawaii products that use Hawaii fruits. It also shows that the benefits of using locally grown fruits and agricultural products can overcome the challenges of local manufacturing.

NEW MEMBER BENEFIT DISCOUNT AT THE RETAIL LEARNING INSTITUTE



HFIA is pleased to announce that we are working with IGA and the Retail Learning Institute to offer members a discount of \$200 off with the retail learning institute!

The Retail Learning Institute is a people development organization supported by The Coca-Cola Company. The Institute has been dedicated to providing online training through a LMS (Learning Management System) for food retailers worldwide. As an educational organization, we serve more than 15,000 stores with blended training programs that include online courses' libraries for onboarding, compliance, departments, management, and specialty topics. The Institute can also provide branded corporate universities tailored to the specific

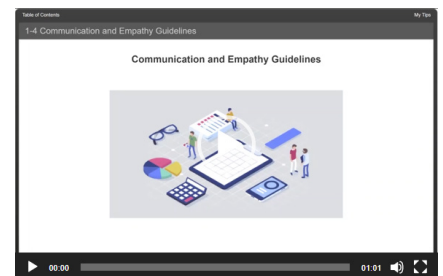
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Online training programs start at \$800 per store per year which gives you access to a wide range of classes for all your employees. As an HFIA member you are eligible for a \$200 discount on your first year program, in addition to volume discounts. Learn more about the Retail Learning Institute at www.retaillearning.net and email Info@HawaiiFood.com for more information and to take advantage of this member benefit.

MEMBER NEWS



HAWAII GAS PARTNERS WITH OCEANIT ON HYDROPEL TECHNOLOGY PILOT

This October Oceanit and Hawai'i Gas announced a new collaboration to pilot Oceanit's HydroPel technology with Hawai'i Gas' 1,100 miles of pipeline network that accommodates a mix of natural gas and up to 15% hydrogen – more utility hydrogen than any other gas utility company in the United States.

Hydrogen (H2) is the simplest and most abundant element on Earth, usually found in combination with other elements such as water (H2O), hydrocarbons, etc. Hydrogen can be produced with renewable energy “green hydrogen” or produced with natural gas that uses carbon capture and storage “blue hydrogen”.



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KTA KONA COFFEE RECIPE CONTEST RETURNS

The Kona Coffee Cultural Festival is the oldest food festival in the U.S. and featured events showcasing Hawaii Island Coffee and Culture throughout the first weeks of November. This year, for the first time since 2019, the acclaimed Kona Coffee Recipe Contest returned to the Festival. The contest awards prizes for best Kona Coffee recipe in sweet and savory categories.



MEET THE 'OHANA COLLECTION

In Hawaii, 'ohana means family. You may have heard that phrase popularized by movies and TV shows, but it is a deeply meaningful word with significance that extends beyond immediate relatives. Embracing 'ohana is to share the closeness and care of family relationships with friends, extend-

ed relatives, colleagues, and community.

'Ohana is not a word that we use lightly at Kauai Coffee. To us, 'ohana means caring for our staff, our land and natural resources, and supporting the Kauai Community. Our 'Ohana Collection coffees are 100% Kauai Coffees that reflect our deep commitment to farming and producing coffee in a way that is good for people and cares for our planet. Explore our triple-certified 'Ohana Collection coffees today and share a cup of aloha with your loved ones this holiday season.



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2022 HFIA CONVENTION

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The 2022 Annual Convention was an amazing celebration of 50 years of HFIA! Our HFIA Ohana make this event a huge success with their amazing support as sponsors, product donors, and a record number of attendees! Mahalo to you all and we can't wait to see everyone back at Aulani in the first weekend of June for our 2023 Convention!

PHOTOS BY ANTHONY CONSILIO





PHOTO: ANTHONY CONSILIO



"With great aloha, five generations later, the Tamura ohana continues to take pride in the family tradition of serving you."
- Clifford Tamura, Owner & CEO



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BY LAUREN ZIRBEL

This year's Convention Membership Meeting featured a very special educational component; an interactive exercise that allowed HFIA to learn from our members. In the Legislative Update I discuss some of the insights that our members provided us about how to best advocate for our industry. We also got actionable information into how to best assist our members in the areas of Networking, Education, and Industry and Community Relations.

Our members make so many positive contributions in their communities every day and we want to help facilitate that. Many members noted a need for HFIA to be more visible in the community at large, as well as to find additional organizations to partner with to give back.

Networking

When asked about what makes a high value networking event, the answer with the most support touched on two things. One was to create events that centered around a specific goal or question and enable members to collaboratively tackle that issue. It also mentioned the importance of creating opportunities for different industry segments, i.e.

manufacturers, distributors, and retailers, to connect within their own segment and also with those in the other segments.

Members' ideas for activities that HFIA could pursue to build bridges between members, included setting a goal for each member at an event to meet each other, and having a structured event where members can all get introduced. Other suggestions were to hold meetings by island, and create an online platform where members can communicate and ask each other for advice.

Creating an app or other online tool was the most popular response to "How can we help members educate other members about services and products they provide?" Introducing new members at events also received a lot of support. All of this information will be incorporated into our networking event planning in the future.

Education

We asked members "What is the best way to offer educational experiences for member companies and member employees to advance their knowledge and skills?" Internships and web resources on the HFIA website were ideas that received a lot of votes, speakers and site tours also got good support.

When asked, "What can HFIA do to help with workforce retention and development?" Overwhelmingly members supported, "Participate in more events or create them focusing on the younger generations to educate and inform them about jobs/opportunities being in the food industry."

For "What are topics that members are most interested in learning about in the Weekly Update and Magazine?" Members wanted to see



Information on new initiatives and products, and data and insights. Others also asked for interactions such as anonymous questions asking for resources and help. HFIA and the Education Committee will use this feedback to create a range of new educational opportunities, events, and materials in 2023 and beyond.

Industry and Community Relations

Our members make so many positive contributions in their communities every day and we want to help facilitate that. Many members noted a need for HFIA to be more visible in the community at large, as well as to find additional organizations to partner with to give back.

Increasing local food production is a goal many in our state share. We asked members, "What policies, programs, and partnerships can be utilized to make growing, producing, manufacturing, and selling food in Hawaii more viable and sustainable?" The answer with the most support was, "HFIA can support a food aggregation and business hub similar to Tsukiji that will help local producers to get their products to market efficiently." This was such insightful and valuable feedback, and we're looking forward to incorporating it into a plan for HFIA's Industry and Community Relations activities in the future.

We'd like to thank all of those who attended our 50th Anniversary Convention and took part in this exercise. This Convention was a testament to the contribution that HFIA has made to our industry over the last half century and to the Association's enduring value. This exercise is a chance for all of us to proactively set the course for our Association and our State's food industry for the next 50 years and beyond. We encourage all members to maximize the benefits of your membership and your positive impact by participating in one of our Committees. If you'd like to join a committee or would like additional information email Info@HawaiiFood.com. We are proud to be the voice of Hawaii's food and beverage industry, and your participation makes that voice stronger.



PHOTO: ANTHONY CONSILIO



Hawaii Foodservice Alliance LLC

WE BELIEVE

At HFA, we believe that building a sustainable and food secure future for Hawaii, requires protecting Hawaii's farmers and agricultural products from mainland counterfeits, masquerading as locally grown products.

These counterfeit products are designed, packaged, and marketed, to look local, so they can be sold at a premium. Unwitting consumers, in good faith, willingly pay extra, because they believe that they are supporting locally grown agricultural products and doing their part to move Hawaii toward a sustainable and food secure future.

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Our keiki deserve a sustainable and food secure Hawaii.



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