

# HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY MAGAZINE

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WINTER 2023-2024

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PHOTO BY ANTHONY CONSILIO

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# HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY MAGAZINE

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# Sustainability is a gift to the next generation.

Candice Marrs and her son visit the sustainable crops at Kualoa Ranch, O'ahu.

## Featured Sustainable Crops:



### 'Ulu

A single 'ulu tree can live for 50 to 100 years or more and produce hundreds, even over a thousand, pounds of fruit annually



### Kalo

Rich in fibre, minerals and nutrients such as vitamins C and B1, kalo is one the most important staple foods of Hawaiian history



PHOTO BY SEAN MARRS

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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

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# CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Aloha Hawaii Food Readers,

As we celebrate the holidays this year we are taking a moment to reflect on the year behind us, and look forward to the year ahead.

2023 has been a productive year for our Association. We had a positive legislative session, and welcomed a range of new members. We've launched an app, MemberPlus, for our members. We've re-launched this magazine as the Hawaii Food Industry Magazine for our members and everyone else in Hawaii who cares about the local food industry. Our events have continued to grow and we had a very successful Convention, and the Made in Hawaii Festival this year was one of our biggest and best ever.

Of course, this year was also marked by one of the worst tragedies our state has ever seen. As a community, we are still very focused on providing the best

support possible for those who were impacted by the August fires. Our industry is integral in the crisis response and recovery process and on page 18 we take a look at some of the ways that HFIA Members responded to support Maui after the fires.

Looking ahead to next year we are preparing for another productive legislative session. Proactively advocating for legislation that improves our state's disaster planning will be one our priorities, Lauren elaborates on this and our other legislative priorities in the Legislative update on page 10. Along with an expanded legislative platform we'll also be engaging in new ways to support our industry through workforce development initiatives, targeted educational events, and more.

The first half of my Chairmanship has been an excellent change to engage with you all and our industry in a new way, and I look forward to continuing to serve you our members, and all of



you who depend on our industry as we move into the future.

Mahalo!

Gary Okimoto  
HFIA Chairman  
COS, Safeway



*"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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## SUCCESS MAY LIE OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE – FIND OUT AT THE NGA SHOW

**BY GREG FERRARA, PRESIDENT AND CEO, NATIONAL GROCERS ASSOCIATION**

I've said many times that the events hosted by the National Grocers Association are opportunities to take time away from your business – as busy as I know you all to be – in order to spend some time working on your business.

But perhaps it's also an opportunity to step over to the mainland and step outside your comfort zone – to explore new ideas, new opportunities, new methods of doing things that may help push your business to that next level of growth and success.

And as most of you read this, we're just about three months away from a chance to do just that, at the 2024 NGA Show, to be held March 10-12 at Caesars Forum Convention Center in Las Vegas. In its 42nd year, this annual three-day show produced by NGA and Clarion Events offers independent retailers, wholesalers, industry executives, food/CPG manufacturers and service providers a chance to learn, to network and to recharge your batteries after another busy holiday selling season.

I'm excited about who we have lined up to help drive your enthusiasm for the business. Leading the way as our opening keynote speaker, sponsored by The Kraft Heinz Company, is celebrity chef and author Carla Hall. A dynamic entrepreneur and leader, Carla's tremendous positive energy, her love of food and her experiences pushing outside of her comfort zone to tackle her fears are sure to resonate with you.

And I'm excited about how the NGA Show continues to grow, with new attendees, new exhibitors and new speakers offering new actionable insights at every turn.

With momentum building since our 2023 event, which experienced the largest attendance numbers since 2017, the show's speaker lineup will include experts, analysts and observers from all corners of our business: retailing, wholesaling, distribution, manufacturing, brand development, technology and finance.

Here's just some of what we have in store for show attendees:

- More than 100 speakers encompassing general and breakout sessions over three days.
- More than 40 sessions and workshops on the latest trends and best practices, with strategies to increase profits and drive the bottom line.
- More than 300 exhibitors in the show's exhibition hall representing a diverse range of product categories focusing on innovations, solutions and new products to drive customer satisfaction.
- The return by popular demand of our Technology Summit as well as the Financial Symposium.
- Excitement as finalists from across the country compete to be the 2024 Best Bagger Champion.
- Our Creative Choice Awards program, showcasing best-in-class marketing and merchandising campaigns.
- Presentation of the annual Peter J. Larkin Community Service Award, Thomas K. Zaucha Entrepreneurial Excellence Award, and the Women Grocers of America (WGA) Woman of the Year Award.
- Co-location with Indoor Ag-Con, the premier event covering the technology of growing crops in indoor systems, using hydroponic, aeroponic and aquaponic techniques, as well as the IGA Rally.
- Plus, plenty of networking time to reconnect with old friends and make new ones.

But don't take my word for it – here's what some 2023 attendees had to say about their experiences at the NGA Show:

*"Events like this are extremely valuable because they give retailers the opportunity to have education, see innovation and to be inspired. If you have all that in one place, you walk away with that wow factor."*

– Michelle Mendoza, VP of marketing and customer experience, Associated Supermarket Group

*"The NGA Show provides us the time to actually get face-to-face time with retailers. It's critically important for us to make those connections and relationships, and The NGA Show allows us to build those. Loved the set up and layout of the show, and attendance was phenomenal this year!"*

– Meagan Nelson, senior director of retail and distributor of growth, SPINS

*"As a first-time exhibitor, our participation at the NGA Show has exceeded our expectations. Beyond all of the tremendous sales opportunities for our products, we've enjoyed networking with all sorts of potential new partners, from retailers to wholesalers and everyone in between."*

– Graham Sorkin, co-founder and chief of staff, The Functional Chocolate Company

If you want to keep up with the constant changes and innovations in our dynamic industry, the NGA Show is a must-attend event.

To register, and to find the latest information on speakers and the education lineup, visit [www.theNGAshow.com](http://www.theNGAshow.com).

And if you're not already an NGA member, we hope you'll consider joining – learn more about the categories and benefits of membership at <https://www.nationalgrocers.org/membership/>. ❄️







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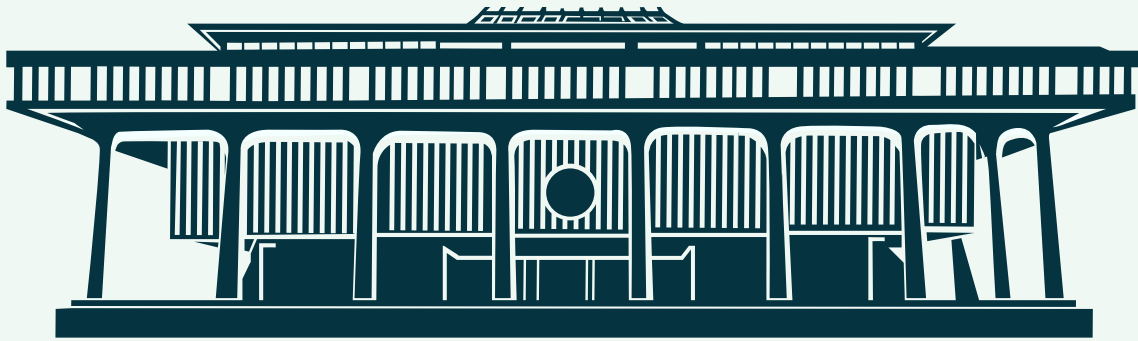


ILLUSTRATION BY JUSTIN KODA

## HFIA TESTIFIES ON FOOD, WATER, AND OTHER SUPPLIES REPORT

This Fall the House created a special Food, Water, and Other Supplies Working Group (FWSWG), Co-Chaired by Representative Greggor Ilagan and Representative Terez Amato.

Per the FWSWG’s draft report, “The purpose of the Working Group is to evaluate the availability and distribution of food and other necessary supplies for displaced individuals and families. The Working Group is committed to thoroughly evaluating the current situation and preparing actionable recommendations that can better support vulnerable communities in times of crisis.”

The report goes on to say that,

“The work of the Working Group sheds light on the current state of disaster supplies availability and distribution, identifies gaps

and inefficiencies in supply chains, and offers concrete solutions to address issues of critical importance.

Specifically, the Working Group proposes six recommendations on the following topics to improve the availability and distribution of essential supplies to displaced individuals and families:

- (1) Distribution Management Plan Maintenance;
- (2) Food Bank Reserves;
- (3) "Right to Garden" Law;
- (4) Hot Food Donation Standards Outreach;
- (5) Emergency Prescription Refills; and
- (6) Emergency Surge Personnel.

Hawaii can significantly enhance its supply availability and distribution system by adopting the recommendations, ensuring a more effective and coordinated disaster response.”

In early November the FWSWG held a hearing to discuss the draft report and accept public testimony. The FWSWG did valuable information gathering in the processes of creating the draft and the report offers important insights and recommendations. However, HFIA believes that there were critical gaps in the recommendations relating to the involvement of the private sector in emergency management. As we’ve seen with the response to the Maui fires and every other recent crisis in our state, the private sector plays an absolutely vital role in disaster preparedness and response.

HFIA submitted testimony with the following recommendations:

**1. Designated and Funded Non-Perishable Food Storage Facilities:**  
We recommend the establishment of more designated and funded non-perishable food storage facilities for use in disasters at mass feeding sites. These facilities should be strategically located across the state, **including both public and private sector operators who possess the necessary expertise in food storage and distribution.**

By funding and collaborating with companies that currently import and distribute our food supply, we can ensure a coordinated response to supply food items quickly and efficiently to affected areas.

**2. Pre-Designated Mass Feeding Sites:**  
To further strengthen our disaster response capabilities, we suggest the creation of additional pre-designated mass feeding sites. These sites should be distributed geographically to ensure adequate coverage in the event of disasters impacting specific areas. We propose **issuing Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and establishing contracts with both private sector and non-profit sector operators who have the expertise to operate mass feeding centers.** This proactive approach will enable us to swiftly mobilize resources and provide food to those in need during emergencies. **continued on page 13**

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Hawaii law (HRS §712-1258) prohibits the sale of all tobacco products, including electronic smoking devices also known as e-cigarettes or vaping products, to anyone under the age of 21 years.

Retailers and their clerks must:

- Post legal signage at or near the point of sale where tobacco products or electronic smoking devices are sold.
- Check photo ID of everyone under the age of 21 who attempts to purchase any tobacco product.
- Only sell tobacco products to customers aged 21 and over.

**Contact the Department of Health to request signage for your store.  
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# A CRITICAL TIME FOR DA BUX

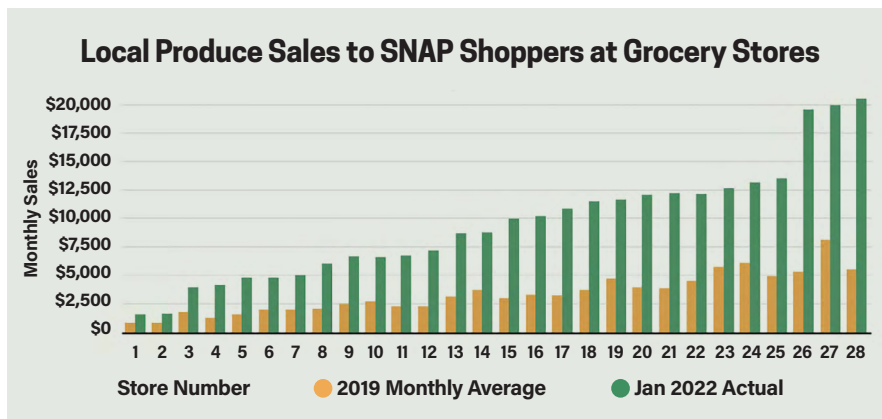
BY ALEXIS CHAPMAN

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Double Up Food Bucks Program, locally known as DA BUX has been an important part of Hawai'i's food safety net since 2017. But in order to keep the program going into the future, more local support is needed.

DA BUX enables SNAP users to have double purchasing power when buying local fruits and vegetables at participating stores across the state. For example a customer could use \$5 of SNAP benefits to buy \$10 of locally grown carrots. It's frequently referred to as a "win-win-win." It's a win for users who can buy more healthy local food with their SNAP dollars, a win for local producers since it incentivizes local produce, and a win for Hawai'i's economy as it keeps SNAP dollars circulating locally in the food supply chain.

Over the last six years funding for DA BUX has come primarily from Federal programs and private donors. The Food Basket, Hawai'i island's food bank, administers DA BUX in partnership with the Hawai'i Good Food Alliance. Since 2017 they have successfully applied for four grants through the USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP). Funds from those grants were matched by dozens of private organizations, including HFIA Members Ulupono Initiative.

Unfortunately, in 2023 the grant application was unsuccessful, leaving the future of this essential program in jeopardy.

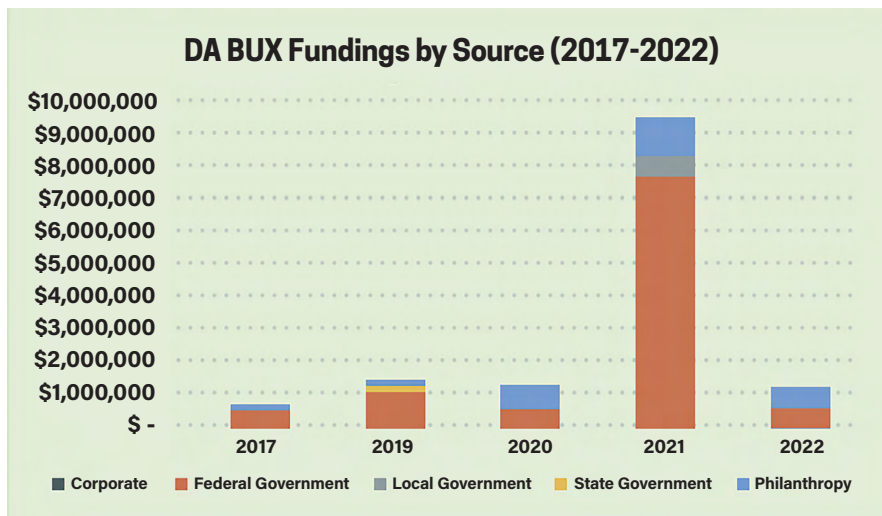


## THE BENEFITS OF DA BUX

Since its start DA BUX has proved beneficial on multiple levels. First and foremost, it enables users to buy fresh, local, healthy food at affordable prices. Another important benefit is that it helps grow the local retail customer base for local farmers. Between January 2019 and January 2022 local produce sales to SNAP shoppers at participating grocery stores on average increased 180%.

HFIA Member KTA Super Stores was an early supporter of DA BUX and their participation was important in getting the program off the ground at its inception. Toby Taniguchi, President of KTA Super Stores, explains why the

program matters and some of the benefits, "For over a century, KTA Super Stores has strived to serve as an essential source for locally grown produce for our Hawai'i Island community. DA BUX provides us the opportunity to support our local growers. Since launching DA BUX in Sept 2017, we have seen transactions associated with the DA BUX program more than quadruple at our seven store locations. We see this as positive sign that DA BUX is motivating families to purchase and consume more healthy fruits and vegetables and that this increased demand will drive increases in agricultural production for the state."



## FUNDING BILLS FAIL AT THE LEGISLATURE IN 2023

Unfortunately, in spite of the benefits for local users, local agriculture, and bringing millions in Federal grant money into the local economy, State financial support for the program has been inconsistent. In 2019 when the program expanded from the Big Island to the rest of the state the legislature authorized an appropriation of \$100,000. In 2021 the state also directed some Federal Cares Act funding to the program. In 2022 and 2023 the state Legislature did not authorize funding.

During the 2023 Legislative Session several bills were introduced that would have provided funding for DA BUX, all of which were support-

ed by HFIA and a strong coalition of others who understand the importance of the program. All of the measures eventually failed. House Bill 1248 made it the farthest. For its final hearing in the Senate it received 80 pages of testimony, all in support. This included support testimony from The State of Hawaii Department of Human Services, Department of Health, and the Department of Agriculture which has been a strong advocate for the program.

Even though the proposed funding measure passed all necessary Committees in the House and the Senate, it failed to pass its joint Conference Committee. Funding for DA BUX was also

included in the Senate version of the State Budget bill, but was not included in the House version, or the final version that eventually passed.

When funding through the legislature failed HFIA and others reached out to Governor Josh Green to urgently request discretionary funds be allocated to the program. This advocacy was

## Governor Green's decision to allocate half a million dollars to DA BUX along with the previous Federal grant from 2021 will enable DA BUX to continue to operate for about 8 more months.

successful and the Governor allocated a record \$500,000 to support the program. These crucial funds will keep the program alive into 2024.

During this time The Food Basket was also working to secure the necessary GusNIP Grants to ensure the continued operation of DA BUX. Regretably, the funding released by the Governor came after the grant had been closed and it was too late to be taken into account as part of the 2023 grant application. The GusNIP grant for this year was denied.

### NEXT STEPS

Kristin Frost Albrecht, Executive Director of the Food Basket discussed the explanation they were given for the grant being denied, "The primary reason for the denial of the grant this year

was the lack of a sustainable funding plan at the State level. What the Federal funders want to see in programs like DA BUX that have received multiple federal awards, is support at the local level for the program to be self-sustaining from sources other than federal funds."

Governor Green's decision to allocate half a million dollars to DA BUX along with the previous Federal grant from 2021 will enable DA BUX to continue to operate for about 8 more months. To keep DA BUX going after that, additional funds will be needed. While the Governor's allocation from this year definitely shows important state support, more consistent state funding is necessary to secure the Federal grants and matching philanthropic funds for DA BUX.

In short, it's vital that some form of funding for DA BUX passes during the 2024 Legislative Session. HFIA, is looking forward to working with The Food Basket, the Hawaii Good Food Alliance, Ulupono Initiative, the Department of Agriculture, the Farm Bureau, and the many other supporters and stakeholders to support this vital program at the Legislature. A critical piece in ensuring that DA BUX funding makes it through the legislature this year will be garnering even more public support. HFIA will be sending out Action Alerts to membership when DA BUX funding bills are being heard so that members can submit testimony in support. We encourage all members and local food supporters to respond and share these to help create long term stability for this win-win-win program. ❁

## Legislative Update: HFIA Testifies on Food, Water and other Supplies Report continued from page 10

### 3. Centralized Information Hub:

To facilitate coordination and communication during disaster situations, we recommend the establishment of a central location for necessary information. This hub should serve as a resource for nonprofits, community helpers, food distribution entities, and food retail companies. It should provide a **clear understanding of what is needed and who to contact to gain access to disaster areas and supply mass feeding centers**. A comprehensive information repository will promote efficient collaboration among stakeholders and streamline our response efforts.

We believe that implementing these recommendations will significantly enhance Hawaii's readiness to respond to food supply challenges during times of crisis. By partnering with both the private sector and non-profit organizations, we can leverage their expertise and resources to better serve our communities. We are committed to working closely with the FWSWG Working Group to help turn these suggestions into actionable measures that ensure the safety and well-being of our residents. ❁

The graphic features the HFIA logo (Hawaii Food Industry Association) in the top left. A large yellow banner in the center reads "BECOME A MEMBER". Below it, a teal banner with white text says "THIS IS A CALL TO ACTION!". At the bottom, it says "JOIN HFIA ONLINE TODAY! HAWAIIFOOD.COM/MEMBERSHIP". The background is dark with colorful geometric shapes and illustrations of pineapples.

## 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!

# ITO EN ANNUAL CHARITY



In the spirit of giving...At our October 9th Charity Classic Golf tournament, ITO EN US Group presented Hawaii Community Foundation's President & CEO Micah Kane and President of Philanthropy Mary Leong Sanders with a check for \$50,000 to the Maui Strong Fund.

Micah Kane shared about the meaningful impact of the community coming together to support Maui. The foundation's mission to aid in the recovery of those affected by the Maui wildfires inspired ITO EN to give an additional \$27,000 to support the Maui Strong Fund!



Kuakini Medical Center's Dr. Nobuyuki Miki pictured with ITO EN CEO Yosuke Honjo



University of Hawaii's Dr. Anne Misawa with ITO EN CEO Yosuke Honjo



Duane Kurisu of Hawaii Executive Collaborative accepting donation from ITO EN President Meito Mochizuki



Tom Shimizu, Joey Salas, TJ Shimizu and Kazu Hoshi donate their \$1,000 team prize to the Maui Food Bank!



Taylor Kaneshiro, Chelsea Clemont



Hawaii Island Mayor Mitch Roth, Yosuke Honjo



Kahu Kekoa Kordell



Chelsea Clemont, Michael and Akane Shimoko, Kit Okimoto, Tyler Tokioka, Taylor Kaneshiro.



Makoto Tanaka, Chelsea Clemont, Hiroki Ishizuka, Naoki Kuze, Taylor Kaneshiro, Takashi Suzuki



Noriyuki Aoki, Chelsea Clemont, Nobuyuki Miki, Mitsuru Misawa, Taylor Kaneshiro, Hideo Noguchi



Kimo Kahoano, Rona Tison



Chelsea Clemont, Len Isotoff, Christine Kubota, Charlie Gustafson, Jay Yoshizawa, Taylor Kaneshiro.



Chelsea Clemont, Eiichi Gocho, Hiroyuki Fujita, Paul Kosasa, Taylor Kaneshiro, Robert Harrison.



Joey Salas, Chelsea Clemont, Tom Shimizu, TJ Shimizu, Taylor Kaneshiro, Kazu Hoshi

# GOLF TOURNAMENT

Our guests from Hawaii, the US mainland, Japan, and Guam also answered the call to donate to the Maui Food Bank. Together with ITO EN's matching contribution we raised \$27,500 to help stock the shelves of the Maui Food Bank!

Total donations to Maui with much heartfelt aloha = \$104,500! Mahalo to our customers and business partners for supporting the local community! This would not have been possible without you!



Micah Kane



Dr. Mitsuru Misawa accepting donation from Meito Mochizuki on behalf of the Honjo International Scholarship Foundation



Ms. Wendy Abe and Jim Hoagland



Mary Leong Sanders and Micah Kane accept \$50,000 donation to HCF Maui Strong Fund.



Rob Harrison, Paul Kosasa



Chelsea Clemont, Jay Ana, Diane Shizuru, Lisa DeCoito, Andy Huang, Taylor Kaneshiro.



Derek Kurisu, Chelsea Clemont, Ken Niimura, Duane Kurisu, Taylor Kaneshiro, Peter Dames



Mitsuru Saito, Taylor Kaneshiro, Isao Takashiro, Mayor Mitch Roth, Chelsea Clemont, Yosuke Honjo.



Russell Hata, Chelsea Clemont, Alan Goda, Glen Gondo, Taylor Kaneshiro, Robert Gondo



Chelsea Clemont, Brooks Broadhurst (back), Robert Ichikawa, Kimo Kahoano, Ted Chen, Russ Kramer, Taylor Kaneshiro.



Tatsuki Anthony Hirai, Chelsea Clemont, Shigeki Yamane, Hikaru Utsugi, Taylor Kaneshiro, Mitchell Noguchi,



Clarence Takahashi, Vice Chairman of ITO EN Hawaii; Meito Mochizuki President & COO of ITO EN Hawaii; Gary Pigott, President & CEO of Mason Vitamins; Russ Kramer, President of La Minita Coffee; Kazuhiro Hoshi, President of Distant Lands Coffee; Jim Hoagland, COO of ITO EN North America; Yosuke Honjo, CEO of ITO EN US Group.



Our tournament collection drive deadline for the Maui Food Bank was extended to 10/31/23. We received additional donations from tournament participants during the extended period and were able to donate a total of \$27,500 to the Maui Food Bank. The check was presented on Monday 11/6/23 in Maui to Marlene Rice, Maui Food Bank Development Director. In the photo is (L to R): Clarence Takahashi, Marlene Rice, Meito Mochizuki.



PHOTOS COURTESY STATE OF HAWAII AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

# DRIVING AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION

BY JESSE COOKE AND KEITH DEMELLO

**T**hrust into the forefront of Hawai'i's agricultural landscape, Wendy Gady, as the new executive director of the State of Hawai'i Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC), embodies a deep-rooted connection to farming.

Raised in a farming family and a tight-knit farming community, Gady's journey into the world of agribusiness began with the humble task of detasseling corn. Those early experiences instilled in her a robust work ethic and a profound understanding of the inherent risks and challenges associated with agriculture, from unpredictable weather to fluctuating land prices and volatile interest rates. Those core experiences, together with multifaceted experience in ag gained since, bring a unique skill set to the table in her new role.

## A QUASI-PUBLIC ENTITY WITH HIGH HOPES

In the realm of Hawai'i's agribusiness, the ADC stands apart. Established by the Hawai'i Legislature in 1994 as a public corporation, it is distinct from a typical state agency. It has unique powers to preserve and revitalize vast land holdings, irrigation systems, water infrastructure, and buildings.



Wendy Gady

"(Legislators) saw the writing on the wall that sugar and pineapple were going to pull out, and all these vast land holdings, irrigation systems, water systems, and infrastructure buildings were just going to sit," Gady said. "It was an absolutely bold step by the Legislature in creating this entity to ... preserve and grow all that land, water and infrastructure, and make that the platform and the foundation for local food production and creating diversified ag. That was so brilliant, honestly."

The scale of ADC's operations is impressive, encompassing a diverse range of activities, from managing nearly twenty-three thousand acres of land, to evaluating the Wahiawā irrigation system, exploring treated wastewater for irrigation and maintaining hydropower plants.

ADC recently transitioned from the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) to the Hawai'i Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT), which highlights further the corporation's role in business development. The HDOA chairperson remains on the ADC board to provide feedback and direction. Gady

is excited by the opportunity to work with those like DBEDT Deputy Director Dane Wicker, who also sits on the board, in creating businesses. "That's in our name ... and economically, that is who we are. We are meant to be an ag business development corporation."

## THE ETHOS OF FARMING IS DEEPLY INGRAINED IN A CULTURE OF INDEPENDENCE

Gady describes farmers as self-reliant and extraordinarily optimistic, even in the face of weather-related challenges and unexpected disasters. Farming demands a special kind of person — someone who thrives on independence and possesses an unshakable optimism. Despite the inherent unpredictability of agriculture, farmers are always planning for the future. And the dedication to farming goes beyond the typical nine-to-five job; it's a seven-day-a-week commitment.

"Cows don't take the weekends off; they still produce milk," Gady explained. "You can't be like, 'Okay, I'll see you in two weeks.' You don't have that flexibility. And I think it really takes the heart of an entrepreneur to get into farming. They are brave."

Farmers are, by nature, fiercely independent individuals. They don't typically ask for help publicly, instead they prefer to work within their networks. While they may need new equipment or investments in their farms, they often don't broadcast these needs to everyone, which becomes a problem when government support is needed.

"Some of this discretion is due to the confidential nature of their business, but it's also rooted in their personality traits," Gady said. "This, in turn, contributes to what I consider a PR and branding challenge for the farming community. We don't share our stories enough, and this can lead to a lack of understanding and appreciation for the trials and triumphs farmers face."

## CHALLENGES OF FARMING IN HAWAII

It's an incredible challenge to feed one of the most remote places on earth. Most calculations show that Hawai'i imports at least 85% of our food. For the food that is grown locally producer contend with added challenges. Hawaii farmers are forced to import their equipment, seeds, packaging, and more.

"We have rising costs," Gady said. "We have water shortages, water conservation, risk management for rain and drought and fire and wind and pests and deer and pigs and insects and disease. We have all of that stuff, but then we have the added pressure of we have to bring things in."



## THE “SILICON VALLEY OF AQUACULTURE”

One thing Hawai'i has in common with the mainland is a talent crisis. There is high demand and need for food entrepreneurs, along with specialists in tech, mechanics, food-related sciences, and conservationists. Where the food jobs of the future in Hawaii are created will be important. “We can create jobs in rural communities that desperately need those. And that retains our kids, and it grows our schools.

“I wonder how many people in the state, in the schools, are aware that we are the Silicon Valley of aquaculture.” Gady sees a lot of potential in the Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawai'i (NELHA). “When you think about the NELHA, they've attracted talent from around the world. They birthed this thriving, energizing group of companies. It's really amazing. We are the leaders in aquaculture.

“But once again, do we talk about it a lot? No, we really don't because we're just doing our thing. And that's okay to a point, but sometimes we need to brand ourselves and have a PR campaign that tells about how amazing this is.”

**“There is high demand and need for food entrepreneurs, along with specialists in tech, mechanics, food-related sciences, and conservationists.”**

## FIRST THING'S FIRST: BUILD CAPACITY

Gady's initial steps in the role were marked by tackling a significant staffing challenge: an office with six critical vacancies. Gady's determination led to impressive progress, with four of those vacancies successfully filled, and two more candidates identified and awaiting offers pending the release of funds.

In a candid reflection, Gady acknowledges the immense workload borne by the existing staff, who had been shouldering the responsibilities of multiple roles in the face of understaffing. While running a lean operation is often a strategic choice, Gady recognized that there's a fine line between efficiency and exhaustion. Her commitment to addressing this issue underscores her dedication to the well-being of the team and the future of the ADC.

## CONNECTING WITH HAWAII'S DIVERSE AG PRODUCERS AND ENTREPRENEURS

Equally essential for Gady was to connect with the farmers and producers working the lands licensed by the ADC. Recognizing the wisdom in her father's saying, “If you listen to the land, it will tell you what to do,” Gady emphasizes the importance of walking the land with farmers. This hands-on approach allows her to grasp the essence of their farming methods, the challenges they face, and their aspirations for growing their businesses.

Another pivotal focus for the ADC involves growing the Food and Product Innovation Network (FPIN). This initiative is set to play a significant role in the organization's future plans. The network aims to identify and support food entrepreneurs across Hawai'i, facilitating innovation in the industry and helping local producers explore new markets and product offerings.

A notable milestone was the release of the entire ADC portfolio within Gady's first 60 days. This significant move signals the ADC's commitment to being open for business and transparent. Gady encourages stakeholders from all islands, even those without ADC land, to fill out an Expression of Interest (EOI). Actively engaging with the community to understand its diverse needs is a central tenet of Gady's vision. Rather than prescribing solutions, Gady believes in listening to stakeholders, from food entrepreneurs to agricultural operators, and collaboratively shaping the future of agribusiness in Hawai'i.



## STRENGTHENING TIES WITH GROCERS

One critical challenge in the state is the lack of consistent dialogue across the food industry between local farmers and grocers or distributors. Farmers often find themselves at a disadvantage, lacking a brand presence and selling their products at commodity prices. Gady stressed the need for farmers to share their stories, establish a brand, and develop a deeper understanding of grocers' needs. Additionally, she envisions the ADC potentially sharing the risk and reward with farmers to help ease the financial burden of entering new markets.

Ultimately, Gady sees grocers and stakeholders like Ulupono Initiative and others as valuable partners in building the future of agriculture in Hawai'i. She believes that collaborating can add a new dimension and provide the necessary support to help Hawai'i's agricultural ecosystem thrive. ❁

# Delivering On Dependability

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Volunteers setting up the War Memorial for aid distribution to the community



# HFIA MEMBERS SUPPORTING MAUI

In times of crisis those who are not directly impacted often wonder: What can we do? How can we help? For HFIA Members the answer can be simple, send food. In the aftermath of the tragic fires in Lahaina our members sprang into action in a wide range of ways, first and foremost ensuring that people who had been affected by the fires had access to food and water.

## SHOWING UP FAST HAWAII FOODSERVICE ALLIANCE (HFA)

Chad Buck, CEO of HFA, is a senior advisor to Governor Green and they were communicating about the fire before daylight on August 9th. By then it was already clear that they would need to mobilize and move aid to Lahaina as soon as possible. HFA immediately embedded with Mayor Bissen and Maui County Emergency Operation Command while HFA Maui operations loaded trucks with food, water, and aid and headed into Lahaina while the fire still burned.

The first loads rolled into west Maui that

afternoon at 2:55PM and the first distribution center was set up near the receiving area at the Ritz Carlton in Kapalua since it was a safe distance from the active fires and the movement of smoke and ash. During the Lahaina blockade HFA worked with the Maui Police Department who escorted truck convoys through the blockade to expedite the movement of aid to those in need.

In recent years HFA has been involved in providing assistance after many of our state's crisis, but Chad described what made the Maui fires different. "While we served through hurricane Iselle, floods, landslides, and the pandemic, nothing we have witnessed or supported in the past comes close to the Maui wildfires. The level of devastation and loss of life that took place in a matter of hours was difficult if not impossible to get your head around. We were connected to staff members from multiple rescue crews across Lahaina, so we continued to witness and hear about the heart-breaking stories of death, destruction and loss."

Chad shared the personal impact this tragedy has had on his employees, and their dedication to serving their community even in the wake of tremendous personal loss. "We have five staff members on our Maui Team who lost their family homes in the fires. All five showed up for work the morning after. One of our staff members showed up in his socks because that is how he ran out of his house before his home was engulfed in flames. All five team members showed up because they knew that there was an enormous need for support in the communities of west Maui and upcountry and they knew that HFA would be the one delivering and coordinating aid across the island."

As the response and recovery moves forward HFA has continued to provide their expertise. On week three, the State and Maui County secured the former Safeway and former Lowe's facilities in Kahului to use for a distribution center and warehouse for supplies coming in to aid Maui. HFA's operations and engineering teams cleared, prepped,



**Above: HFA trucks line up with critical supplies for Lahaina at the War Memorial**

of Climate Change & Sea Rise, co-produced by Chad Buck and Hugh Gentry of KITV. Chad recommends that anyone interested in learning about the efforts check out the documentary.

When asked his thoughts on how to best support Maui now, Chad offered the following advice "As Maui continues opening up to tourism, I encourage local people from other islands to visit and support Maui. There are thousands of families who have a family member or two who have lost their jobs and are in danger of defaulting on their mortgages. Maui will continue to need support from all neighboring islands as they move forward."

### **SUPPORT FROM SISTER FOOD BANKS THE HAWAII FOODBANK**

Across the state 1 in 6 Hawai'i residents struggle with hunger every day. With the wildfires thousands of households were displaced causing many more families to lose their consistent access to safe, healthy food. In order to meet this need Hawai'i Foodbank has been working collaboratively with the Maui Food Bank to provide support to those impacted by the wildfires while continuing to address the ongoing food assistance needs across the state. When the fires struck, the Maui Food Bank immediately sprang into action working to provide food at several new distribution points and shelters. The Hawai'i Foodbank immediately stepped up to provide much needed support. Preparing emergency food and supplies to send to Maui was a crucial first step.

In addition to food the Hawai'i Foodbank has also been providing much needed staffing and logistical support. Between two and six Hawai'i Foodbank team members have been sent to Maui each week, and other team members are assisting remotely. The Hawai'i Foodbank team has been working with local and national companies to source needed food items for Maui distribution while managing the tremendous amount of food donations provided locally and nationally.

They have secured additional warehouse space to store all products donated for Maui, and will continue to send regular shipments of food, depending on what is needed. More than a dozen containers have been received already, and another 40-plus containers are in the pipeline.

Across the continent other sister food banks have stepped in with various forms of support. Feeding America, Central California Food Bank, Find Food Bank, Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County, Alameda County Community Food Bank, Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano, Second Harvest of the Greater Valley, Feeding San Diego, Food Bank of Santa Barbara County, Second Harvest Silicon Valley, San Diego Food Bank, San Francisco-Marin Food Bank, Redwood Empire Food Bank, and others have generously provided emergency food donations, staff support and more. Additionally, many of these food banks have offered cross-docking services, an efficient logistics strategy that saves money, reduces shipping time and maintains freshness of food.

The Hawai'i Foodbank continues partnering with Maui County to provide food and technical assistance for their Maui-facilitated distribution sites in Kahului and Kahana offering food, water and supplies to people who have been impacted by the wildfires.

### **FINDING A WAY ACROSS THE CHANNEL OKIMOTO CORP.**

The fact that our state is made up of islands can make disaster response challenging. The fact that many of our towns are coastal communities linked by only one or two roads can make disaster management extremely challenging. When news of the fire broke, Kit Okimoto realized that some of the most accessible food to Lahaina might not be on Maui at all, but rather at Okimoto Corp's Friendly Market Center on Molokai.

Despite the proximity, Kit immediately ran into a problem, "I asked the shippers and there was no system in place to get large

and set up both locations with the necessary equipment to run operationally and handle the large amount of goods coming in. Chad talked about the scale of their mobilization into the impacted areas, "As of today, we have made over 1,300 trucking moves from the west coast to Hawai'i and across all islands to expedite aid into Maui." Many of the mainland organizations and donors moved their truckloads of goods through HFA Long Beach for consolidation into ocean containers to move their donations from the west coast to Maui. Today and for the foreseeable future, HFA continues to operate as the logistics arm for state and county as they support the various distribution sites across Maui.

Prior to the fires, Chad and other stakeholders planned a Disaster Preparedness Summit, which was initially scheduled to take place at the Governor's Office in September, but is being rescheduled for early 2024. The timing of the Summit was planned to coincide with the release of the documentary Preparing for Disaster in the Age

PHOTOS COURTESY HFA

quantities of food off Molokai and over to Maui, it's basically reverse logistics." Of course that did not stop the Friendly Market Center team and the Molokai community from finding a way to help. Soon a system was in place that involved private boats taking donated food and supplies from Molokai and delivering directly to the beaches just outside of Lahaina.

There were some difficult decisions to make. Private boats and jetskis dropping supplies on the beach is not an official means of distributing aid, but it was clear that was the most effective method available to transport the goods provided by the Molokai community and businesses. The Friendly Market Center team also had to make a tough call about whether or not to let the last of the bottled water go over to Maui. Kit recalls how his staff made the decision, "They said, 'Our faucets work, theirs don't.' So, we sent over the last few pallets of water."

Okimoto Corp. kept working to get aid from their Waianae Store warehouse to Maui through more official channels as well, including the Hawaii Foodbank. The first barge with donations eventually made it to Kihei, but took several days longer than the community created donation fleet.

### BEING THERE THROUGH IT ALL MINIT STOP/ OHANA FUELS

Minit Stop/ Ohana Fuels has locations on Maui and the Big Island in several of the areas that were hit hardest by the fires. From the very beginning Their dedicated employees found ways to serve first responders and their community as they dealt with the crisis.

When the first fire started in Upcountry Maui on August 7 the Makawao and Pukalani locations thankfully did not have to be evacuated. Foodservice Manager Tanya Doyle, took the opportunity to organize and provide 30 meals from the Makawao Store to the firefighters and other first responders who were battling the fire.

On August 8, 2023, multiple wildfires erupted on the Big Island, leading to a mandatory evacuation order. Road access to Minit Stop Kawaihae was cut off. In response, shift manager Eric Federizo transported food to the first responders battling the blaze. According to Racye Kaaua from the highways division helping with the fire, the provided food managed to feed everyone who was helping fight the fire.

In Lahaina on August 8 power went out in the morning, and many businesses made the decision to close for the day. Despite being unable to pump fuel or prepare hot food, Sheila Bueno, district manager, and Emily De Gracia, store manager, chose to keep the local Minit Stop open. They were motivated by the continuous stream of community members expressing gratitude for providing access to food and drinks. They eventually had to close at 3:30 PM, and just an hour later, an evacuation order was issued. Thankfully, all the employees are safe.

On August 9, 2023, with the Upcountry Maui and Lahaina fires still uncontained, another wildfire was threatening Kihei. Kahau Freitas and Michelle Mercer from HQ were dispatched to aid the store and allow employees to evacuate their homes, which were in the fire's path. As the fire escalated and smoke encroached, it was decided to close the store. Thankfully, the fire didn't progress further, sparing homes from harm. Later, the store reopened to prepare food donations for first responders.

Since the fires the Minit Stop/ Ohana Fuels leadership team has focused on their team members' welfare. Samuel Howarth, Human Resource Director, guided affected employees through the process of securing temporary shelter and registering with FEMA and other essential agencies. Meanwhile, Antoinette Palisbo, Minit Stop Safety

financial support for their staff members' recovery. They raised over \$130,000. All funds were distributed to those impacted. This effort extended not only to those directly affected but also encompassed employees whose immediate family members faced the impact of this unfortunate event.

On August 12 Kimo Haynes, company President, confirmed that Minit Stop/Ohana Fuels in Lahaina was unharmed. With fuel being crucial for the community, Kimo mobilized leadership to reopen the fuel station. Estefano Ferrari, Facilities Director, secured a generator while Garrett Glassen, IT Director, arranged for a Starlink system to provide Satellite Internet.

Minit Stop Lahaina resumed fuel operations on August 12, thanks to the dedicated efforts of the resilient Minit Stop/Ohana Fuels team, including employees affected by the fires, and the invaluable support of MEMA (Maui Emergency Management Agency) volunteers. Over four days, Minit Stop provided 1,450 fills, offering \$20 free fuel to those in need. Residents with means chose to purchase fuel, leaving the free supply for their neighbors, showing remarkable generosity.

In the following month, Minit Stop extended complimentary drinks and snacks to first responders, including fire, police, sheriff, and national guard personnel stationed in the area. To meet the community needs, their Lahaina team prepared food in Kahului and delivered food to Lahaina daily. This continues today as they await water restrictions to be lifted.

Greg Cabantin, Minit Stop General Manager, spoke about their role in the recovery in their communities, "We recognize this is going to be a long and complicated recovery. Maui is our home and we continue to support the community. In addition to a generous donation to the Hawaii Community Foundation, Hawaii Petroleum, Ohana Fuels, and Minit Stop continues to support grass roots organizations, like Ikaika Ohana, Honokawai Relief, and others, with donations of food and fuel."

### TOGETHER WE GIVE FOODLAND

Foodland customers statewide responded immediately to requests for help after the Maui wildfires. Prior to August, Foodland had set up a program called "Together We Give" in honor of Foodland's 75th anniversary to support a few non-profit organiza-



Manager, orchestrated the provision of supply kits to ensure their employees' immediate needs were met.

Minit Stop's parent company, Saltchuk, in collaboration with the wider Saltchuk family of businesses, rallied together to mobilize



Lahaina's Safeway team

COURTESY SAFEWAY

tions with missions that are important to the company's founders.

Foodland encouraged customers to join them in supporting these organizations at checkout in June, July and August. One of the organizations that Foodland was already supporting in August was the American Red Cross of Hawaii. When the fires happened Foodland immediately reached out to the Red Cross to ask if it would be possible to designate all donations to their Red Cross Maui relief efforts. Once they agreed Foodland encouraged customers to join them to help, and they were amazed by the overwhelming response.

By the end of the month, Foodland customers donations together with Foodland's gift, meant that more than \$244,000 had been raised for the American Red Cross of Hawaii to help those impacted on Maui. In addition, Foodland also designed and sold "Kako'o Maui" and "Rise up for Maui" t-shirts at all stores so that proceeds from the sales of these shirts could further their support for Maui.

### A MARATHON NOT A SPRINT WAIALUA FRESH EGG FARM

Leadership at Waialua Fresh Egg Farm recognized that a disaster of this magnitude would create a large scale need for food in

the present, and into the future. Right away they began looking into the quickest way to get eggs to Maui. They worked with Aloha Harvest to deliver initial donation of eight pallets of eggs, 7200 dozen to Maui by August 14th.

Then the longer term planning began. Before sending additional donations Waialua fresh coordinated with food hubs on Maui to ensure that those who would receive, store, and distribute the eggs had power restored and could handle the donations. Once all the details were nailed down Waialua Fresh Egg Farm was able to send their second donation of 20 pallets, 18,000 dozen eggs, a month later on September 14. This second shipment went through Hawai'i Foodbank and Waialua Fresh continues to work with them to coordinate weekly donations. Jon Kato, of Waialua Fresh Egg Farm commented on their long term commitment to providing support, "We will continue to provide support to the communities affected on Maui for years to come."

### SUPPORTING HUNGER RELIEF EFFORTS SAFEWAY FOUNDATION

On September 27, 2023, Safeway announced that more than \$1 million has been donated to disaster relief efforts aiding people and communities affected by the Maui

fires, courtesy of a fundraising campaign supported by customers and employees. Through an in-store fundraising effort in August, Safeway stores raised money to assist various non-profit organizations with the goal of providing meals to those impacted. Donations were collected at check stands at Safeway stores in Hawaii and the mainland.

The money raised supports hunger relief efforts through the Maui Food Bank, Hawaii Foodbank, the Salvation Army, Boys and Girls Club Maui, and Red Cross Hawaii. The Safeway Foundation matched the first \$100,000 donated by customers.

"We are grateful for the generosity of our customers and inspiring teamwork of our employees to assist the Lahaina community," said Clayton Eto, Safeway's Hawaii District Manager. "We are committed to continue serving west Maui and hope our support will help nourish our neighbors in need."

Along with financial assistance, Safeway donated food and water to evacuation shelters. The Lahaina Safeway reopened on September 13 following the County of Maui disaster area restrictions being lifted for the Lahaina Cannery Mall. Store hours are currently 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. ❀

# NEW MEMBERS



## KAUAI HEMP

Kauai Hemp Company is Hawaii's only certified organic, vertically integrated, hemp farm and CBD product manufacturer. Using sustainable growing and manufacturing practices, KHC crafts some of the finest CBD and CBG products in the world. We are fully compliant with both the USDA and Hawaii DOH and all of the products are third party tested. Produced in our state of the art, solar powered facility, using cryogenic ethanol extraction and wiped film distillation. Ultra premium certified organic CBD tinctures, topicals, bath and body, pet products and more.



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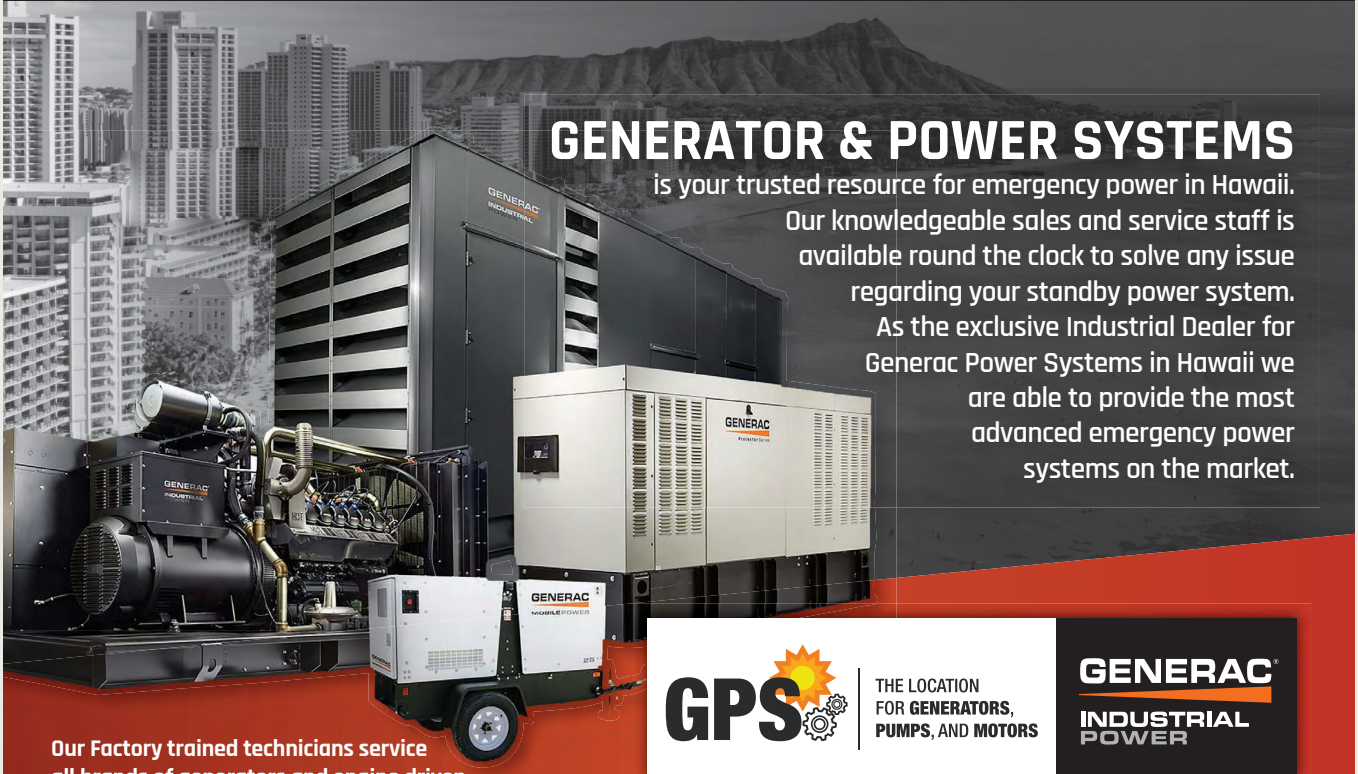
## BITCOIN DEPOT

### BITCOIN DEPOT

Founded in 2016, Bitcoin Depot's (Nasdaq: BTM) mission has been to connect customers who prefer to use cash to the broader, digital financial system. Bitcoin Depot is the largest operator of Bitcoin kiosks, with over 6,500 locations in North America. Bitcoin Depot offers an additional 5,400 retail locations where customer can convert cash to crypto starting at the Point-of-Sale register through its BDCheckout mobile app product. And, through its leading crypto processing platform, BitAccess, Bitcoin Depot offers kiosk processing and managed services to operators and merchants.

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# MEMBER NEWS



## Kauai Hemp Company Launches Strongest Organic CBG Tincture and a Special CBD Collaboration with Bill Kreutzmann of the Grateful Dead

Kauai Hemp Company announces the launch of a new line of CBD products; "Bill the Drummer" a collaboration with Bill Kreutzmann, drummer and founding member of the Grateful Dead. A certified organic line consisting of CBD & CBG hemp extract tinctures, pet products, and topicals. The inspiration for this collaboration was born of Bill's desire to find the highest quality CBD products available. As a lifelong musician who runs the equivalent of a marathon in movement every evening, Bill was looking for safe and effective products to support his own wellness routine. After coming across Kauai Hemp Company's products and their impressive quality compared to what else was available, he was inspired to bring his own CBD line to life. Being a long-time Kauai resident and strong supporter of sustainable agriculture, Bill found a partner in Kauai Hemp Company to bring his vision to life. In his own words "I only present what I take and what I take has treated me kind."

Additionally, KHC has also recently launched their new organic Royal CBG 2700 mg/ 30 ml tincture. This CBG tincture is the strongest organic Hawaii-made CBG tincture available on the market. All Kauai Hemp Company hemp products are sourced from their locally grown hemp, are USDA/OTCO certified organic, and third-party lab tested for consumer safety, and transparency.



**circular economy**

Roughly 1 in 3 respondents have good intentions to dispose of or recycle their food packaging, but don't know the proper procedures to do so.

33% believe they are recycling or disposing of them properly

76% of respondents typically wash their food containers

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### good.natured Ready-to-Eat Report

Our reliance on convenience eating is here to stay. good.natured®, an earth-friendly, plant-based company released its Ready-to-Eat Report revealing consumer sentiment around convenience eating and sus-

tainable food packaging.

In spite of persistent inflation, our dependency on prepared foods is growing and driving packaging waste, with 72% of respondents saying they've increased their consumption of ready-to-eat meals since the start of 2023. Simultaneously, 77% of respondents consider sustainable packaging crucial, while almost half believe it's the businesses' responsibility to offer eco-friendly alternatives. As convenience eating behaviors evolve, we'll be keeping an eye on how these trends impact food and packaging.



### KTA Pharmacy Working to Keep Their Community Healthy

This fall KTA Pharmacy reached out to their community with several initiatives to help keep them healthy and safe. KTA Puainako offered three times a week sidewalk flu and Covid-19 vaccination clinics for walk-ins. On October 28 KTA Pharmacy hosted the Ohana Vaccination Clinic at the Hilo Civic Auditorium providing Covid-19 and flu vaccines. In November KTA Puainako held a "Diabetes Awareness Fair" with free glucose testing, vaccinations, diabetes information and more. Previously KTA Pharmacy team had produced an entertaining and informative video on vaccinations. The video highlights the benefits of getting vaccinations and information to allay fears for anyone who is still concerned about vaccinations.

## NEW HFIA MEMBER BENEFIT FROM JPG HAWAII!

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# HFIA BOARD GATHERS TO SET A PATH FORWARD

BY LAUREN ZIRBEL

This past October HFIA's Board of Directors attended the Association's first ever Board Retreat. Over several hours at the Honolulu Country Club the Board Members and proxies looked at the progress the Association has made over the last two years and worked with consultant Jeff Berlin to set a course for the future of HFIA.

## THE WORK WE'VE DONE SO FAR

This Board Retreat was a continuation of work started during HFIA's 2022 Convention. At the 2022 Annual Membership Meeting HFIA took several steps to move our Association forward and plan for the future. A New Vision, Mission, and Values Statement was approved. We also conducted an interactive session to get information from members about their priorities in the areas of Advocacy, Networking, Education, and Industry and Community Relations.

In the area of **Advocacy** our members' priorities were used to create our legislative platform for the 2023 Legislative Session. HFIA proactively advocated for legislation in these areas and worked with other stakeholders to build coalitions and exert positive influence inside and outside the legislature.

For **Networking** members requested an app, which we now have. The app also includes a live searchable member directory which is exclusively available to Members. During the session participants also noted the importance of high value networking events, we had a number of very successful events in 2023.

In regards to **Education** members requested more web resources, which we've added to the website and app. Members

also asked for information about new initiatives and products as well as data and insights. We're incorporating these priorities into the content we share in the Weekly Update and Hawaii Food Industry Magazine.

For **Industry and Community Relations** members requested outreach to youth to help show the value of food industry jobs. We partnered with ClimbHI for the Made in Hawaii Festival and are planning a job fair for 2024. Local food is another priority for members in this area and we're working on several initiatives including a goal oriented panel discussion for the 2024 Convention.

During the 2023 Convention we conducted a survey to gather information on legislative priorities for the 2024 Session. The top 3 priorities selected were:

- Food Affordability
- Workforce Development
- Food Production and Agriculture

At this year's Convention we also launched the Hawaii Food Industry Magazine, with new live online content. The first online stories have received several hundred views, and readers have been clicking through to the members mentioned in the stories.

One of our biggest successes this year was the Made in Hawai'i Festival. The 2024 Festival was back indoors at the Hawai'i Convention Center. We were able to host over 400 vendors booths and welcome close to 50,000 visitors! The Festival was profitable for HFIA and vendors reported millions in sales. The Festival itself was able to raise \$58,193.87 for the Maui Strong Fund through ticket and t-shirt sales, and many vendors also made substantial donations.



## SETTING A COURSE FOR THE FUTURE

To enable HFIA leadership to set a course for how the Association can continue to work towards its mission, we posed a series of questions to the attendees. The first was,

### What are the biggest emerging trends and future challenges for the food industry?

- Workforce changes:
  - Chronic understaffing due to lack of workforce.
- Decreasing consumer spending:
  - More e-commerce coupled with increased competition.
- Security overall:
  - Food security
  - Cyber security
  - Safety of employees and customers
  - Increasing crime.
- Impacts of climate change, war and the cost of crude oil.
- Supply Chain Issues.
- Food affordability.

### What can HFIA do to help members adapt to these trends and challenges?

- Present subject matter experts on: AI (Artificial Intelligence), industry trends, food security, supply chain resilience, and increasing the availability of locally grown and manufactured products.
- Workforce: Work with local youth to educate them about opportunities for career growth in the food industry.
- Promote member to member benefit and knowledge sharing.
- Legislation: Engage members to proactively advocate for improvements in policy that impact food security and business sustainability/viability.
- Produce an event to educate members about how AI tools can be used to ease workforce shortages.

The group then broke apart into HFIA's four committees to brainstorm how these Committees could proactively work to address these issues. The feedback from this session will help inform our Legislative platform and guide our committees going forward.

continued on page 26



PHOTO BY ANTHONY CONSILIO



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Maile Miyashiro, Sr. Director Customer Experience

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**Last Word: HFIA Board Gathers to Set a Path Forward** continued from page 24

**Proactive Positive Legislation to Pursue for 2024: Government Relations and Advocacy Committee:**

- Improve statewide food security and resilience with DA Bux funding.
- Work with state agencies to promote grants for food supply chain companies so they can reduce operational costs and bring down the cost of food.
- Funding for disaster preparation and distribution networks.
- Support sustainable food initiatives and infrastructure.

**Networking: Convention and Social Committee**

- Sponsor local students and have a career fair for students to learn about food industry careers.
- Keep current events and build on their success.
- Build bridges to help members educate each other about their services and products.

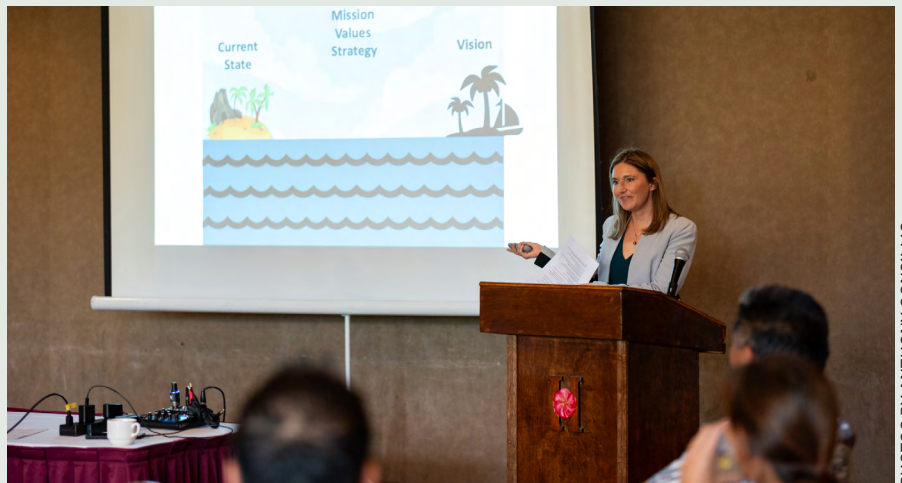
**Community Service and Education Committee**

- Create targeted educational events for various categories of employees within the food industry. Expand the types of employees receiving HFIA emails, so they are aware of our events and educational programs.
- Reach out to members to increase the number of individuals participating so that more people have access to events and HFIA's shared knowledge base.
- Continue alternating between in person and online events and try to do hybrid events in the future so that the most members possible can attend.

**Industry and Community Relations: Membership Committee**

- Create conduits for local students to enter the food industry such as job fairs and sponsoring students' educational certifications by working with ClimbHI.
- Reach out to Made in Hawaii Festival vendors to ensure they know about the benefits of membership.
- Host special membership events to connect with any non-members in the industry.
- Reach out to former members to get new contacts and reengage.

HFIA has been building momentum in a number of these areas and will continue to use this valuable insight to set our course as we move into the future. ❀



PHOTOS BY ANTHONY CONSILIO

**VISION**  
A strong, sustainable, and resilient food industry in Hawai'i.

**MISSION**  
Improve conditions in the Hawaii food and beverage industry by actively promoting the strength, sustainability and resilience of Hawaii's food and beverage retailers and suppliers through highly effective:

- ✓ **Advocacy**
- ✓ **Networking**
- ✓ **Education**
- ✓ **Industry and Community Relations**

**VALUES**

- ✓ **Integrity:** Carry out all our work with the greatest responsibility and accountability.
- ✓ **Service:** Benefit the public and our stakeholders.
- ✓ **Sustainability:** Meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Preserve a livable environment and enable local businesses to thrive.
- ✓ **Resilience:** Work with the entire food supply chain, non-profits, and government to ensure that, in times of crisis, we can ensure food security.
- ✓ **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion:** Enhance a diverse, equitable and inclusive food system.

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Every day

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