



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Agriculture  
March 24, 2017 at 8:30 a.m.

By  
Donald O. Straney  
Chancellor, University of Hawai'i at Hilo

HCR 145 – REQUESTING DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES, UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MANOA COLLEGE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES AND UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT HILO TO FORM A TASK FORCE FOR EVALUATING THE FEASIBILITY OF FOREST FARMING PIGS ON THE STATE'S AGRICULTURE LANDS

Chair Creagan, Vice Chair DeCoite and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for HCR 145. My name is Donald Straney, Chancellor of the University of Hawai'i at Hilo (UH Hilo). I am testifying as a member of the Hawai'i Island community and I support the intent of HCR 145 to establish a task force to evaluate the feasibility of forest farming of pigs on the state's agricultural lands.

Raising pigs stocked on well-managed and appropriately fenced pasture or forested areas are a proven production method that has been used for many years elsewhere in the world. There are a few small farmers already adapting this method in Hawai'i. Pasture- or forest-based pig production can have some economic and sustainability challenges and outcomes can differ over time, however it can work well in the long-term. This production method has fewer waste management problems associated with most confinement feeding operations. The pigs kept on well-fenced pasture are more vigorous, receive more exercise, exhibit more normal pig behavior, and likely experience less boredom and stress. They are considered a niche-market with rich meat flavor similar to wild pig.

Fencing costs and associated maintenance may be a challenge to minimize escapes and possible interactions with the already abundant feral pig populations.

The University of Hawai'i at Hilo has faculty with the expertise needed to contribute to the task force and I urge the Committee on Agriculture to approve this resolution for the future of our state and to ensure a bright future for our farmers.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HCR 145. Aloha.