



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
And

Senate Committee on Higher Education
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SB 2894 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairs Gabbard and Kahele, Vice Chairs Riviere and Kim, and members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment and Committee on Higher Education:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of the intent of SB 2894.

Crop performance testing trials are a necessary component of sustainable agriculture in order to (1) identify the currently available cultivars that grow best under the diverse soil and weather conditions presented by Hawai'i; (2) provide current information that can assist farmers to make relevant decisions in their farming operations; and (3) identify cultivars that have a degree of disease resistance/tolerance and can be included in breeding programs.

We feel that a clarification is necessary based on how crop performance trials are accomplished. Trials must be done in multiple years and on multiple sites due to annual weather and soil variability. For example, weather conditions in one year may promote the expression of disease, while the result in another year could be better due to different weather conditions. Multiple site trials of the same cultivar are necessary to refine the site conditions on which a particular cultivar does best.

The multiple year requirement for trials is in conflict with one year of funding. This bill will help move crop performance trials forward, but it should be recognized it will take multiple years of funding to accomplish the ultimate goal.

CTAHR edible food crop Extension agents, as well as Extension Specialists and Researchers are knowledgeable and experienced in crop performance trials. They have the ability to accomplish these trials at CTAHR research stations and as on-farm trials with collaborating farmers.

We support the intent of SB 2894 with the caveat that it does not affect, and is in addition to, the UH budget request.