H.C.R.#263

URGING THE LEGISLATURE AND ADMINISTRATION TO SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE HAWAII'S AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY'S EFFORTS TOWARD SUCCESSFUL CO-EXISTENCE AMONG ITS SECTORS AND TO RECOGNIZE THE ECONOMIC, HUMAN, AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF SUCH CO-EXISTENCE IN A DIVERSIFIED AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY.

Testimony Presented Before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

March 30, 2005

By

Andrew G. Hashimoto
Dean, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
University of Hawai‘i
Testimony for
House Concurrent Resolution 263

URGING THE LEGISLATURE AND ADMINISTRATION TO SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE HAWAI'I'S AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY'S EFFORTS TOWARD SUCCESSFUL CO-EXISTENCE AMONG ITS SECTORS AND TO RECOGNIZE THE ECONOMIC, HUMAN, AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF SUCH CO-EXISTENCE IN A DIVERSIFIED AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY.

Presented before the
House Committee on Agriculture

The Twenty-third Legislature
State of Hawai‘i
March 30, 2005

by

Dr. Andrew G. Hashimoto, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

I am pleased to contribute the expertise of the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) to the decision-making process on House Concurrent Resolution 263 urging the legislature and administration to support and encourage the agricultural community to seek coexistence practices for the benefit of the industry, the community, and the environment.

Diversity of practices has long been a cornerstone to the development of agriculture. Over time, practices have evolved to improve farm productivity, meet market demands, and respond to environmental concerns. The University of Hawai‘i believes in supporting all forms of agriculture, without giving preference to one practice over another. As an island community, it is in our best interest to foster all aspects of agriculture to meet the various demands of society and the environment. To do this, good communication and understanding between parties are critical.

Agriculture’s resources must be used wisely to identify and mitigate real risks. Repeatedly debating small or non-existent risks deflects from efforts to address more serious needs. As an example, researchers from CTAHR and USDA focused on identifying mechanisms to segregate non-GM from GM papaya, resulting in practices that support a thriving market to Japan under zero-tolerance conditions. If this time had been spent solely on debate, that Japanese market would not exist today. We strongly believe that there can be case-by-case development of procedures for various other crops and practices just as has occurred for papaya.
The University of Hawai‘i supports coexistence of all forms of agriculture. We try to find approaches that best meet farmers’ needs, whether through conventional cultivation, integrated pest management, organic production, or genetic engineering.

We strongly believe that conventional agriculture, organic farming, and biotechnology can coexist. Transgenic papaya is a fine example of this. Thus, we strongly urge this body to pass the Resolution as written.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.