



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment  
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By  
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### HB 463 HD1 – RELATING TO FOOD SAFETY

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Ruderman and members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of HB 463 HD1. Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Certification is important, in fact crucial, for assuring both food safety and farm success. Compliance with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) regulations is also necessary for marketing success. The Harmonized GAP program and Group GAP programs attempt to bring both food safety programs into a consistent approach and provide small farmers with ways to reduce the cost of compliance. The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM), College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) strongly supports increasing the GAP training in the state. By providing safe and high-quality food to the public, Hawai'i agriculture will increase public confidence in Hawai'i products and serve as a model to other associated and supporting businesses resulting in a consistent contribution to the economy in Hawai'i. This bill is consistent with CTAHR Extension training in food safety and provides additional help in areas that CTAHR Extension does not function. For example, CTAHR does not do farm audits, yet there are Group GAP programs currently operating in Hawai'i that do internal audits for all farms in a group. When the U.S. Department of Agriculture inspectors comes in, they audit only a fraction of these farms and, if given a positive audit, all farms are certified for GAP. With GAP being harmonized with FSMA it is obvious how this can be a saving to the individual farmer. This type of program also is an incentive for small farmers to join and have their crop aggregated with others.

In previous testimony, we gave all the resources that CTAHR has available to help the farmer in being prepared for a GAP audit. However, CTAHR does not do audits of individual farms; nor does it have the capacity to do so.

CTAHR is involved only in education and technical support, which is only part of the certification process.

This bill addresses that need and additional needs that move the farmer toward certification. UHM/CTAHR is ready to collaborate with the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) and other agencies to support the education process related to GAP Certification. We support the funding going to HDOA, but defer to their testimony.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB 463 HD1.