



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
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By

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And

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SB 1111 – RELATED TO AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 1111 which establishes the agricultural statistics program in statute and appropriates funds for the program.

First, we respectfully offer an amendment on page 5, lines 11-12, to correct the name of the college to University of Hawaii college of tropical agriculture and human [resources] resilience (CTAHR). The renaming of the college was approved in October 2024 to better align CTAHR's name to its land-grant mission of improving the human condition and human use of natural resources through research, education and Cooperative Extension.

Second, we respectfully offer the following comments that CTAHR has increased its capacity in agricultural economics with two new agricultural economists hired last year and a third food and agricultural marketing faculty under recruitment currently. CTAHR already had two agricultural economists. With this expanded expertise and the opportunity to involve Extension Agents and undergraduate and graduate students in targeted data collection and analysis, CTAHR is planning to build a center on Food and Agricultural Marketing, Business and Economic Systems. CTAHR Dean has briefly discussed with HDOA Board Chair the possibility of collaborating. HDOA and CTAHR will work together to identify specific roles for each in building a comprehensive and impactful agricultural statistics program for the state.

CTAHR believes that the unique climate and agricultural practices of Hawai'i make it critical to collect specific agricultural data. Accurate and up-to-date ag statistics are crucial for all stakeholders in the Hawaiian agriculture sector to make informed decisions, develop effective policies, and monitor effective programs that will have large and far-reaching impacts.

A revitalized and enhanced Agricultural Statistics program could allow CTAHR to better respond to and serve the following needs of the Hawaii's agricultural sector.

1. **Pest and Invasive Species Control:** Data on crop, livestock and forestry losses could guide research and extension priorities to address issues facing Hawaiian farmers such as crop diseases and pests.
2. **Productivity Analysis:** Yield data could allow researchers to identify ways in which yields could be sustained and increased.
3. **Weather Impact:** Impact on weather changes can be assessed to provide information for CTAHR to focus research and extension priorities for sustainability.
4. **Risk Management:** Consistent statistics help in identifying potential risks such as pests, diseases, and climate change impacts, enabling proactive measures to mitigate these risks.
5. **Resource Allocation:** Accurate data helps in the proper distribution of resources and funding.
6. **Crop Management:** Understanding which crops thrive in which geographic areas can guide farmers in crop selection and management practices.
7. **Unpredictability Management:** Data on pest outbreaks and management techniques can be shared, helping farmers across the state.
8. **Market Analysis:** Accurate data provides insights into market trends, consumption and supply, and price fluctuations, which help farmers plan their production and marketing strategies effectively.
9. **Research and Innovation:** Consistent data supports agricultural research and innovation, leading to the development of new technologies and practices that enhance productivity and sustainability.
10. **Market Planning:** Knowledge of what's grown and harvested can help in market planning and export strategies.
11. **Labor Market:** Analysis on labor supply and demand to mitigate labor shortage and cost of production.

In essence, consistent agricultural statistics are the backbone of a thriving agricultural sector, ensuring that all stakeholders have the information they need to drive progress and sustainability. As Hawai'i strives to increase food security within the islands, having accurate data on Hawaii's agricultural production will be key to achieving greater food security as we will need up-to-date production and consumption data.

We support the intent of SB 1111 with the suggested amendment. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.