

# THE INDEPENDENT VOICE

Newsletter of the Kona Coffee Farmers Association

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## Editor's Note

We are delighted this month to have two guest contributors. Shawn Steiman of Coffea Consulting starts a series of articles this month, and Ken Sheppard is offering timely advice for pulper maintenance. And *Get Connected*, by our hardworking webmistress, is now a regular feature.

We welcome guest articles of any practical nature to our coffee farmers (no politics please); send them to [info@konacoffeefarmers.org](mailto:info@konacoffeefarmers.org) with Newsletter in the subject line..

## Legislative Update

HB1226, known as the Pre-emption Bill, would give the State the right to over-ride any County ordinance against GMO crops. The Hawaii County Council ban on GMO coffee is grandfathered in, but GMO coffee could be grown on any other island and seeds or plants brought here.

Having passed in the House, it has been sent to the Senate. This Bill if it passes puts the profits of major mainland chemical businesses over the rights of Counties to control their own local agriculture and farmers' needs.

## The Glory of Coffee

Drinking coffee is an exercise in deconstructing a complex experience and exploring it on a physical, emotional, social, and intellectual level. At least, it can be. To dissect a coffee drinking experience in such a way, though, we need to understand each of those different levels. Due to space limitations, we're only going to talk a bit about the physical level.

The physical level is simply the organoleptic experience of the coffee, i.e., its taste, smell, touch. The physical experience of great coffee is at least as complex as great wine,

chocolate, or cheese. To handle such a party for our senses, we need to know something about coffee quality. Once we have a framework for quality, we can begin to have a more intimate experience with it.

The first thing to know about coffee quality is that it isn't preference. Whether we like a coffee or not doesn't necessarily tell us anything about its quality. Quality is something we define. True, some of those definitions are chosen because of preference but we move past that subjectivity when discussing quality.

We broadly define quality into two categories: characteristics and descriptors. The former are the backbone of every coffee. These are the terms all coffee people use- aroma, fragrance, acidity, flavor, body, sweetness, aftertaste. Every brew can and should be discussed in these terms. Whether the intensity of the characteristics is good or bad depends on the drinker's preference.

The other category is the descriptors. These are the experiences that make an ordinary coffee extraordinary. These are the smells and flavors that we more commonly associate with other foods and beverages, though the possibilities are not limited to comestibles- caramel, chocolate, floral, lemon, cherry, pepper. They were never added to the coffee but are inherent to the coffee's complexity. It is these types of experiences that the specialty coffee movement has begun to herald and seek out. These are the experiences that will help correlate coffee price with coffee quality. And these are the experiences that Hawaii farmers need to be discovering in their coffees.

Coffees with a dizzying array of flavors and aromas can be easily found. However, if we don't expend the effort to ponder and explore the brew, their glory will pass us by, unnoticed. Every cup we drink can be broken down into its quality components. We can understand them, weigh them against each

other, and become intimate with them. The qualities are the trees in the forest, each valuable in its own right. If we don't mentally wrestle with the physical level of coffee, we'll always be missing out on the potential experience. If we miss this level, we'll never reach the others.

Being in touch with the physical level of coffee begins as a personal experience and continues with the exploration of the other levels. Deconstructing the experience is the path towards maximizing the pleasure we get from coffee. Just having a solid grasp of coffee quality, however, will give you practical tools to improve your business and the experience of your customers. In the next part of this series, we'll discuss why farmers and consumers need to understand and assess quality.

Shawn Steiman is author of *The Hawai'i Coffee Book: A Gourmet's Guide from Kona to Kauai*, and owner of Coffea Consulting, a company that aims to improve coffee quality and sustainability by working with farmers, roasters, retailers, and consumers. Learn more at [coffeaconsulting.googlepages.com](http://coffeaconsulting.googlepages.com).

## Pulper Kindness....

It's the end of coffee season, so throw a tarp over the pulper, forget it and hope it works just fine next season? Hold on - NOW is time to be kind to your pulper, do some preventative maintenance, not let it deteriorate over the next few months.

Cherry pulp is very corrosive and our high humidity is not kind to machinery. I have been asked to fix several seized pulper bearings that resulted from rusted shafts and complete lack of lubrication.... Making the time to clean up your pulper will be rewarded next season in less hassles, increased equipment longevity, and overall lower costs.

Take the pulper apart as necessary to clean and lubricate all the shafts, bearings, gears and chains, and make sure all the fasteners and adjusters are free. If you have a pulper with sheet metal side frames, clean off the rust, and prime and repaint with a

Rustoleum type paint. Cast iron and aluminum frames are fairly forgiving, cast iron especially so, but a bit of paint will not hurt.

Important - make a note of the position of the breast plate before you remove it so it can be easily repositioned close to the "sweet spot" on reassembly - either make a measurement, or count the number of turns on the adjusting screws or nuts. Photos help too.

Many of the lower cost pulpers have plain steel shafts and oil impregnated bronze bearings or just cast iron bearings. If the shaft has rusted, polish it with a strip of fine emery cloth Do NOT use emery on the bearings as hard carborundum particles will get embedded in the soft bronze and wear out the shaft later. Clean off all residue with solvent, and lubricate the bearings with oil or grease. If the pulper is fitted with sealed ball bearings give a pump or two of fresh grease into the Zerk fittings - don't get too carried away or you may blow out the seals.

Fasteners also rust and seize. These should be cleaned up with a wire brush and ideally reassembled with anti-seize compound (hardware stores or NAPA) or grease. If really bad, just replace them. If the pulper has fasteners screwed into castings that are sticky or frozen, it is a good idea to clean up the threads with the proper sized thread tap (beware - some South American pulpers have metric threads). Tap and die sets are available at most hardware stores. Nuts and bolts should be able to be re-assembled finger tight before finally tightening with a wrench. Be careful not to over-tighten bolts in soft aluminum castings as you may strip the threads. If you do, they can be repaired with Helicoil inserts or, if there is room, be tapped out to the next size thread.

Finally, when all is back together, give everything an overall spray of WD40 or similar. Don't tightly wrap the pulper in a tarp or plastic as it traps moisture and condensation. If it is not in a roofed area, keep any cover loose to allow air to circulate with maybe a wood cover over the hopper to keep the geckoes out.



A covered pulper in great condition

Pulpers have a hard life. Hosing out cherry pulp and skins after each run in the season and adding a squirt of lubricant will do wonders. There are many pump/aerosol sprays on the market but a good old-fashioned oilcan with a long spout is a handy tool, cheaper on lubricant too!

Ken Sheppard - ASHE LLC  
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## Get Connected

By your KCFA webmistress

Look for some new changes on our KCFA website, eventually <g>. Six months up and running and we have more new ideas. Imagine, 216 people during March 2009, looked at "About Kona Coffee", our history of Kona Coffee. Wow, we are educating people! We have a new large listing of machinery of all types in our Classifieds: Go to [www.konacoffeefarmers.org/Classifieds.asp](http://www.konacoffeefarmers.org/Classifieds.asp) to see what people have for sale or want! Pick up a bargain! Send your Classifieds to [info@KonaCoffeeFarmers.org](mailto:info@KonaCoffeeFarmers.org) so you can be included. Help the [www.konacoffeefarmers.org](http://www.konacoffeefarmers.org) site be even better. Upload your images to your free farm listing or call 328-8060 if you want help. List what you have for sale! All free as a KCFA Member benefit.

Site Fun Facts: Most people come to our site at 4 am and 9 pm. Must be the great coffee. And Honolulu people click in 1/3 more often than people from Kona, next followed by Houston people. Go figure!

*Mahalo, Cea*

## Editorial

Further to Chuck Moss's excellent report last month on the Coffee Research Update, we received a number of responses from members

who read the full notes posted on the KCFA website.

How alarming it is when our supposed agricultural experts are proposing these issues as important: *Simultaneous flowering*. In Kona? Your harvest comes in all at the same time? Who's going to pick it? How will you pulp an entire crop at once? Where will your dry it? *Caffeine free GMO coffee*. Cross pollination would forever contaminate our Kona stock and make it worthless in the gourmet market.

*Produce different and cloned varieties*. What happens to our Kona taste profile?

On the other hand, if you have not yet read the notes, there are some excellent reports on shade coffee, ground cover for coffee orchards, and pest control.

## Mahalo!

Lift your Kona Coffee-filled mugs high, to our KCFA volunteers! Thank YOU for your generous donations of 100% Kona Coffee to the KCFA! Janet Jones, Dexter & Virginia Washburn, Jeff & Carol Seel, Bob & Cea Smith, Hans & Marcia Eckert, Deb Sims, Craig Smith, Robert & Dawn Barnes, Randy Lofquist, Jim Perry, Bruce & Lisa Corker, Sandy Masterson & Carol Weaver.

Thanks also to the volunteers who staff the stand along Alii Drive, most recently: Carol Seel, Roma Johnston, Michelle Joven & Lilly Kang, Kathy Wood, MaryLou and Chuck Moss, and Motter Snell. Our kind volunteers talk story, hand out KCFA Brochures and sell our genuine 100% Kona coffee.

And a special mahalo to Chuck Moss for milling, MaryLou Moss for roasting, and to Kathy Wood and MaryLou who did all the packaging.

FYI: We will need parchment or green for events that come up throughout the year, and when we have it on hand, it gives our hard working volunteers an opportunity to go to Alii Drive to sell coffee when a ship comes into Kona. Generous donations of time and coffee (and electricity!) converted, so the KCFA can continue its good work.

Our Volunteers rock! Call 329-4035 if you want to be part of the fun or to donate your 100% Kona Coffee.

## Join or Renew Today!

At [www.konacoffeefarmers.org](http://www.konacoffeefarmers.org)