

THE INDEPENDENT VOICE

Newsletter of the Kona Coffee Farmers Association

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Legislative Update The Pre-emption Bill

HB1226 is dead for this year. HB1226 would have pre-empted counties and the state of Hawaii from making any new laws in opposition to, or in regulation of GMO crops. It also would ban labeling of GMO crops. The chair of the Senate Energy & Environment committee failed to schedule a hearing by the deadline date. It can however be revived next session without having to be re-introduced.

In preparation for this eventuality, Pete Hoffman introduced Hawaii County Council Resolution 81-09 in response HB1226, telling the State Legislature do not pass this anti-democratic Bill. Our courageous County Council voted unanimously on April 22 (Earth Day) to pass the Resolution opposing HB 1226. The Maui county council passed a very similar resolution in March, so two of the four counties of Hawaii are making their views clearly known.

President Bruce Corker sent his mahalos to Pete Hoffman... "On behalf of the more than 250 members of the Kona Coffee Farmers Association I thank you for introducing and working for passage of Resolution No. 81-09. By urging the State Legislature not to pass HB 1226 this Resolution supports the interests of Hawaii County farmers in protecting our specialty crops from GMO contamination and supports the interests of all Hawaii County residents in defending principles of home rule."

Our thanks also to all the County Council members who continue to support their local coffee farmers with their legislative efforts.

Neil Abercrombie

As you may know, Neil Abercrombie is running for Governor. As part of his campaign, he came to Hawaii in March and met with a number of Kona residents and organizations, including the KCFA.

This was a great opportunity to present the Kona coffee farmer's views on a number of issues. In particular the need for a Governor and a Chair of the Hawaii Agriculture Department who will actually support Hawaiian agriculture and farmers' interests over those of mainland corporations.

Bruce Corker requested that as part of the gubernatorial campaign's "agenda for change" be a commitment to "fix the fraud" (Sen. Clayton Hee's words) of the current coffee blend labeling laws.

We will let you know when we receive Mr. Abercrombie's response.

Gary Hooser

Gary Hooser is running for Lieutenant Governor, and includes environmental stability as a cornerstone of his campaign. Gary kindly came to Kona and met with members of the KCFA on April 25th. As President Bruce Corker succinctly put it "Kona's coffee growers are delighted by your view that the Kona Coffee name needs to be protected, and that small farms need to be supported as a valuable asset of Hawaii."

KCFA emphasized to Gary also the need for an HDOA chair who will support **agriculture** instead of mainland-based retailers.

Mahalo Costco!

Costco's John Eagan, VP for the region that includes Hawaii, has authorized a change in shelf labeling following a letter from KCFA. It

changes "Hawaiian Isles Coffee/Ground Kona Classic" to "Hawaiian Isles Coffee/10% Kona Classic Ground".

John Eagan writes, "I enjoy the coffee (10% blend), but prefer the 100% Kona variety. It has always been Costco's policy to work with local suppliers AND be completely honest with our valued membership."

Mahalo Costco, we appreciate your actions.



The first ever Ka'u Coffee Festival took place last weekend, celebrating the upsurge of coffee growing, and the national awards that Ka'u coffees have been winning over the last two years.

The event kicked off Friday evening with a Miss Ka'u Coffee contest won by beautiful Jolynn Cuison of Na'alehu. Saturday was an all day festival at the Pahala Community Center. Plenty of booths showcasing coffee, local foods, crafts, live music, farm tours, and coffee education.



Visitors sample coffee at Rusty's Hawaiian booth

The recipe contest was well attended, and included famous chef Alan Wong as one of the judges.

A popular highlight was Shawn Steiman's tasting presentations, brewing seven different Ka'u estate coffees in an identical way so that

the visitors could go down the line and sip the coffees for comparison. (see Shawn's article below...)

The festival finished on Sunday with a day long series of workshops on quality coffee production. We applaud our neighbors to the south east for a great festival, and many more to come.

Nurture Your Coffee Trees

More than 35 people attended the round table workshop on May 2nd, "Strategy for nurturing your coffee trees." Robert Barnes talked about organic fertilizing and the importance of knowing your soil. Bob Smith talked about conventional fertilizing, how to spread the fertilizer, how often, and also discussed ants, sooty mold and twig borer. Ray Anders talked about weed control using two types of sprayers with RoundUp. Ken Sheppard demonstrated tools and techniques for equipment maintenance.

There was lots of good discussion and questions between the "Round Table of Experts" and our KCFA farmers, and lots of note taking!



Participants and advisors talk story

ALERT - Our next Seminar is on Thursday, May 28 with Jonathan Deenik from UH Manoa, specialist in Soil Fertility and Soil Quality. For details, konacoffeefarmers.org, and click on Events.

Why Assess Coffee Quality?

Shawn Steiman is author of The Hawai'i Coffee Book: A Gourmet's Guide from Kona to Kaua'i and owner of Coffea Consulting. His company offers quality assessment services and education. Learn more at coffeaconsulting.googlepages.com

Hopefully, after reading my last article, you have a sense of the depth and nature of coffee quality. But since you and your customers already

drink coffee, what's the point in deconstructing and exploring it so carefully? Why should you and your consumers assess coffee quality?

For consumers, it is an easy answer. As people learn more about how they respond to the world around them, they tend to seek out experiences that are complex and interesting. By assessing coffee quality and exploring the possibilities within a cup, consumers will discover a more meaningful and complex experience. Simply, they will enhance their love and excitement for coffee.

Most farmers are also coffee consumers. Thus, you will derive increased pleasure from your regular drinking just as a regular consumer would. As you assess your coffee more, you'll get better at doing it, thereby furthering your personal delight. However, I submit that, as a farmer and businessperson, you have a greater responsibility and need to assess coffee quality than a consumer does.

Your consumer wants a coffee that is fun and interesting. However, with so much coffee to choose from worldwide (never mind just in Kona!), your coffee doesn't stand out. When a consumer finds you, you need to be able to teach them about the coffee and convince them it is worth trying. You must be able to communicate to them detailed information about your coffee's characteristics and descriptors. If you can do this, they'll be excited by your knowledge, attention to detail, and passion for coffee. A purchase won't be far off.

At a more basic level, you need to assess quality to ensure quality, a.k.a., quality control. Sometimes, things go wrong in coffee production. Perhaps a defect slipped by unnoticed or a particular roast was different than normal. You need to know this so that you don't sell inferior product. Consumers want an excellent product consistently. If you aren't assessing the quality of your coffee, you can't guarantee this.

Your love of coffee, your ability to communicate with your consumers,

and your confidence in assuring a consistently excellent product all translate into increased price and profitability. For your sake, I strongly encourage you to regularly assess your coffee's quality.

Get Connected

By your KCFA webmistress

The Membership area on the website has had some renovating, making it easier to join or renew. Let us know what else you would like to see by emailing info@KonaCoffeeFarmers.org.

We've had 1,780 Farm Clicks in the last month - people spending an average of 50 minutes looking around, in spite of the economy's downturn. Hope you got some sales!! Tuesdays and Fridays appear to be the most popular days of the week to peek in. And midnight, the most popular time!

We've had 168 people read our last month's newsletter on line. Our newest Classifieds include a member's farm for sale, someone wanting to work on a coffee farm in his free time, to learn the coffee business.

FUN Email to KCFA: *"My father brought back a lb of coffee from his trip to Hawaii. I would like to order the exact same coffee that he gave me. It was in a gold bag marked 100% Kona Coffee - medium roast - whole bean. Please let me know how I would go about ordering this coffee. I loved this coffee soooooooooooooo much that I would prefer not to purchase anything except your brand."* More emails were exchanged before the woman scanned over the "gold bag" and it turned out to be the KCFA coffee (!) that MaryLou roasts and packages with donations of green from you, our members!! Keep the yummy donations coming!

Mahalo, Cea

Join or Renew Today!

The Kona Coffee Farmers Association was founded to protect and promote 100% Kona coffee, and to support and provide an independent voice to the farmers who grow Kona coffee.

Find information and join online at www.konacoffeefarmers.org