

THE INDEPENDENT VOICE

Newsletter of the Kona Coffee Farmers Association Sept. 2006

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SPECIAL ELECTION EDITION

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For the upcoming Primary Election the KCFA sent questionnaires to all candidates in all the races that cover our Kona districts. 12 Gubernatorial candidates, 9 U.S. Senate, 13 U.S. Representative District 2, 3 State Representative District 5, 1 State District 6, 2 State District 7, 2 County Council District 6, 4 County Council District 7, and 1 County Council District 8.

The Questionnaires provided background information on six issues, followed by questions. The questions are listed below with a table showing how the candidates responded. Many candidates took the time to make comments also. Some comments modified their answers, others expanded on them or explained their position.

This article includes some of the interesting comments we received. However their inclusion here should not be read as an endorsement or criticism of any candidate. For the full text of the background information and questions, and EVERY comment that we received, please see our website at www.konacoffeefarmers.org.

VOTE!

Q 1. Reform of Kona Blend Statute

Current state law permits the use of the "Kona" name on packages of "Kona coffee blends" which contain as little as 10% actual Kona coffee. California has prohibited the use of the word "Napa" even as part of a wine maker's brand name unless a minimum of 75% of the wine in the bottle is from grapes grown in the Napa Valley. Will you support legislation to require that a minimum of 75% Kona coffee be contained in any package labeled as "Kona coffee blend"?

Q 2. Country of Origin Labeling

"Kona coffee blends" confuse consumers and damage the reputation of "Kona coffee". Many consumers mistakenly believe that "Kona coffee blends" are a blend of various Kona-grown coffees. Will you support legislation to require identification by percentage and country of origin of all non-Kona coffee contained in a "Kona coffee blend" package?

Q 3. Accurate "Made in Hawaii" Labeling

HRS 486-119 permits the deceptive labeling of foreign-grown agricultural products as "Made in Hawaii" if 51% or more of the value is added by in-state processing and packaging, even if none of the agricultural products have been grown in Hawaii. Will you support amending HRS 486-119 to prohibit use of "Made in Hawaii" labeling of any package of agricultural product if it contains less than 51% Hawaiian grown product by weight or volume?

Q 4. Assessment of Green Coffee Import Protections

Will you support legislation and funding for HDOA to study and assess the effectiveness of the current green coffee importation regimen (methyl bromide fumigation) in protecting Hawaii coffee orchards from coffee leaf rust and coffee twig borer (which have destroyed coffee production in many parts of the world)?

Q 5. Prohibition of Unfumigated Green Coffee

If continued use of methyl bromide (a carcinogen and atmospheric ozone depletant which was ordered to be phased out by 1999 in the Montreal Protocol of 1987) for green coffee fumigation is prohibited, will you support a ban of green coffee imports into Hawaii to protect the state's coffee production?

Q 6. Service of 100% Hawaiian Coffees Exclusively

Kona coffee and other Hawaiian coffees constitute one of our state's signature agricultural products. If elected, will you direct that only 100% Hawaiian-grown coffees (including 100% Kona Coffee) be served at events hosted by your office?

Candidates Table of Responses

GOVERNOR	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Comments?	
<i>Aila, William</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Selected comments from Gubernatorial Candidates * See website for ALL comments.
<i>Berish, George</i>	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*	Other*	*Modified by Comments	
<i>Cunningham, D.</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
<i>Hara, Bradley</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
<i>Iwase, Randy</i>	Other*	Yes	Other*	Yes	Yes	Yes	*Modified by Comments	
<i>Lingle, Linda</i>	Other*	Other*	Other*	*Yes	Other*	Other*	*Modified by Comments	
<i>Peabody, G.</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
<i>Tanabe, Van</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
These did not respond to the questions: Brewer, Daniel, Manner, Mattes								
<i>Linda Lingle Q2: I support country of origin labeling at the national level for agricultural crops including coffee. This would help consumers understand exactly what they are purchasing.</i>								
<i>Van K. Tanabe Q6: Sure sounds like the Kona Coffee Farmers Association have been getting the short end of the legislative stick.</i>								
US SENATE	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Comments?	
<i>Akaka, Daniel</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Selected comments from Senate Candidates * See website for ALL comments.
<i>Case, Ed</i>	Other*	Other*	Other*	Yes*	Other*	Yes*	*Modified by Comments	
<i>Mullen, Lloyd</i>	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	
<i>Pirkowski, E.</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
<i>Tatai, Steve</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
These did not respond to the questions: Amsterdam, Beatty, Collins, Friedheim								
<i>coffee imports until such time as new methods may be approved. Q6: Yes. I have promoted and will continue to promote Hawaii's agricultural products, including Hawaiian-grown coffees, at all possible functions with patrons and my colleagues in Congress.</i>								
<i>Ed Case Q3. I believe labeling should not mislead consumers, and I want to ensure that the highest possible percentage of Hawaiian-grown agricultural products are included in such products. However, we must find a way to apply such a prohibition without hurting sales of existing Hawaii products. Q5: I would certainly support efforts to prohibit imports of green coffee without an appropriate treatment to prevent the introduction of pests and diseases. I have introduced a bill, HR3468, the Hawaii Invasive Species Protection Act, which would provide Hawaii with the ability to preempt federal laws and to prohibit introduction of plant materials deemed to threaten Hawaii's agriculture or environment. A specific prohibition of green coffee would not be accomplished by legislation, however, but by promulgation of a rule by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. The State of Hawaii would have to request an emergency action to prohibit the importation of green coffee until it was proven that it posed no threat to Hawaii agriculture. The Specialty Crop Competitiveness Act, which I co-sponsored and which passed in 2005, includes authorization of funds to identify alternatives for methyl bromide for fumigation.</i>								

George L. Berish *General: I believe that Hawaii's only good future is superior quality, and that applies from agricultural products to public schools. Therefore, your concerns (except one) are among the ones I'd not only support, but fight for.*

Randy Iwase Q1: *I would support increasing the percent Kona Coffee - hesitate to 75% only because I'd like to discuss this further to be assured that increasing to 75% would not adversely affect the level of market sale.*

Daniel Akaka Q5: *I have and will continue to support research and development of alternative methods of eradicating diseases and pests from our agricultural products and those received in the State of Hawaii. However, should extensions for use of Methyl bromide to fumigate coffee not be granted, and there is no other means of to ensure that coffee leaf rust, twig borer, and other diseases and pests may not enter the State of Hawaii, then I would support a ban of green*

US REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT 2	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Comments?
Aiponlani, H.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Hanabusa, C.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Hee, Clayton	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes*	*Modified by Comment
Hirono, Mazie	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hogue, Bob	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Other*	Yes	*Modified by Comment
Hooser, Gary	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Menor, Ron	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Schatz, Brian	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Wilcox, Robert	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Zuiker, Joe	Yes*	Yes*	Other*	Yes*	Yes*	No*	*Modified by Comments

Selected comments from US REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT 2 Candidates * See website for ALL comments

Mazie Hirono Q1: Kona coffee is such a unique brand that it should not be attached to a product that does not contain significant amounts of the item. A goal of 75% may not be reached in the first go-round, but we should make the strongest argument we can for it.

Joe Zuiker Q6: I wont patronize you by promising to only serve your coffee. I have seen coffee growers in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic while serving in the Peace Corp and have recently traveled to Columbia. My respect for all of you farmers is immense. I will use my efforts to balance your desires with those of competing forces and the public and will seek fairness in all legislation. Balanced burdens and benefits is my goal. I do demand that all parties to a proposal be fully honest as to the benefits and burdens that their proposals would impart on the public.

These did not respond to the questions: **Garcia, Kawanakoa, Matsunaga**

STATE REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT 5	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Comments?
Herkes, Bob	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hosley, Charles	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Last, Michael	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Selected comments from State District 5 Candidates * See website for ALL comments.

Bob Herkes Q4: I had a Resolution to do that

Charles Hosley Q4 & 5: I would discourage the importation of any foreign green coffee into Hawaii.

Q6: As a long term farmer I know who sells 100% Kona and who doesn't. My legislative office will always have 100% Kona coffee which I will provide.

Michael Last Q1: Any Kona Blend is deceptive. I buy and drink only 100% Hawaiian coffee. Some 100% Kona, some 100% Ka'u, some 100% Molokai, some 100% Kauai - never a blend of any Hawaii and non-Hawaii. **Q3:** Yes. But I feel it must be 100% not 51%. I've always said in public that a Honda with Mercedes-Benz hubcaps doesn't make it a Mercedes!

STATE REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT 6	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Comments?
Green, Josh	Other*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Other*	Yes	*Modified by Comments

Selected comments from State District 6 Candidate (runs unopposed) * See website for ALL comments.

Josh Green Q1: I support real truth in labeling but I do not believe there is agreement between the legislature, the Governor or the Dept of Ag that 75% is a feasible percentage presently. There was great resistance in 2004-2005 on this proposal. A compromise on the % is likely. **Q5:** A total ban would require debate of the entire legislature, I would support bans on imports that jeopardize our agricultural products, especially coffee.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT 7	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Comments?
Evans, Cindy	Other*	Yes	Other*	Yes	Other*	Other*	*Modified by Comments
Sanborn, Wil.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Selected comments from State District 7 Candidates * See website for ALL comments.

Cindy Evans Q1: Other. I agree to increasing amount. Want to make sure % keeps the industry strong. Look for your groups leadership and other groups or individuals and would like debate in committee hearings.

Q5: Other: Will ban shut down businesses in coffee industry except those growing coffee in Hawaii businesses? What HDOA Planning now to protect coffee plants?

William Sanborn Q1: Yes. I think it is appropriate that if packaging and labeling uses the identity, then it should contain a majority percentage of that identity. **Q4:** Yes. Funding must be reasonable and definitive.

COUNTY COUNCIL DISTRICT 6	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Comments?
Holleman, Gerald		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jacobson, Bob	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

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COUNTY COUNCIL DISTRICT 7	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Comments?
Basque, David	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Ford, Brenda	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Isbell, Virginia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kihoi, Lei	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Selected comments from HCC District 7 Candidates * See website for ALL comments.

Brenda Ford Q3: Is it possible to have a "Grown in Hawaii" label that would be supported by our Ag community? **Q4 & 5:** I would also support no importation of green beans. We have enough pests & don't need to take chances with a signature crop.

Virginia Isbell Q1: Yes. I introduced the original Kona Blend at 60% while in the House of Representatives. We were able to get only 10%. **Q5:** Yes. This would also mean no coffee blends made in Hawaii. If blends are made outside of Hawaii - how will the 75% blend be monitored?

Lei Kihoi Q1: Yes I would support/intro a Reso provided the KCFA came to a consensus via majority to support this endeavor. **Q2:** Yes, provided 1) that the Kona farmers agree by consensus majority 2) that we do not support farmers who use pesticides in their coffee plants or use "slave" labor (ie: children) as their labor force; 3) that there be a way to determine percentage-wise whether this % is truly an accurate reflection of real coffee.

COUNTY COUNCIL DISTRICT 8	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Comments?
Pilago, Angel	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Q4: I will consider introducing a resolution to protect all Hawaii grown agricultural products.

Selected comments from HCC District 8 Candidate (runs unopposed) * See website for ALL comments

Angel Pilago Q1 & Q2: I agree with the intent and substance of your rationale. I am willing to work together with you to introduce a Council resolution.