

THE INDEPENDENT VOICE

Newsletter of the Kona Coffee Farmers Association

December 2009

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Editor – Christine Sheppard	

ANNUAL TRADE EXPO

Services and Resources

Specifically for Small Farms

Friday January 29th 10-2:30

Makaeo Pavilion Old Airport, Kailua Kona. Displays, Mini-workshops, Product and Service Info, and Technical Talk-story. Admission is free to all – Door Prizes for KCFA Members, membership available on day. For more information, call 329-4035 or Marylou@cuppakona.com.

ANNUAL MEETING

Our Annual Member Meeting will follow the Trade Expo, at 3pm.

Membership Renewal

RENEW your membership NOW!

Membership costs for 2010 are:

Voting Member-\$25

Supporting Member-\$30

Associate Member-\$20

RENEW ONLINE at

konacoffeefarmers.org. Log in as a member and click on “To renew your membership click here”. Your billing information will appear onscreen. Enter your credit card number and expiration date. Then click the “Join” button at the bottom of the page. Your membership will be confirmed by email or phone.

RENEW BY MAIL

Send your check payable to KCFA to Deb Sims at PO Box 832, Honaunau, HI 96726-0832. Your membership will be confirmed by email or phone.

Any questions please contact me at joanierowe@rowesviewcoffee.com or in the evening at 808-328-0825.

We look forward to your continued support in 2010!

OUR ACTIVITIES THIS YEAR – A Brief Review from our Hard Working Committees

Legislative Committee – Bruce Corker

This year the KCFA expanded its truth-in-labeling efforts to national and international levels.

In June Harold Hoogasian served as KCFA’s International Liaison and delegate to the General Assembly of OriGIn (the Organization for an International Geographical Indications Network) in Teruel, Spain. Harold joined representatives from many producer organizations worldwide (eg. Champagne, Parma Ham, Colombian Coffee) to adopt an important resolution calling for stronger international protections for regionally identified ag products such as Kona coffee.

Later in the summer, KCFA President Bruce Corker was our delegate at the University of Arkansas’ “Agile Agricultural Summit” in Fayetteville. Bruce joined with other conference representatives from American producer groups (Napa Wine, Idaho Potatoes, Northern Pecans, and others) in planning for the formation of an “American Origin Products” association to promote and protect the interests of regionally identified U.S. specialty crops.

At the State level, at our request, Kona Representative Denny Coffman introduced HB 931 – a truth-in-labeling bill providing for an increase to 51% genuine Kona content in any package labeled as a “Kona Blend”. Given the opposition of the economically powerful and politically connected Honolulu blenders, House Speaker Calvin Say and Agriculture Committee Chair Clift Tsuji killed HB 931 without giving it a public hearing. The blenders continue to pour enormous resources into avoiding open public consideration and examination of this issue. After almost 19 years of deceptive “10%” blends, the KCFA will continue its dedication to the reform of Hawaii’s coffee labeling law.

Events Committee - Mary Lou Moss

The thing I love about the KCFA "Events" is getting to know the members better; and let me tell you, we have some hard working, volunteering members! I was blessed this year with getting to know several new members who volunteered to help with the fun KCFA events along with our regulars. So I want to extend a hearty thank you to the many members who volunteered at KCFA events. KCFA definitely makes a presence in the community! It's that razor's edge, it's that little extra effort that the KCFA volunteers do, that makes us known in the community. Yes, we're quality, not just quantity.

KCFA started last year with a bang by hosting our 2nd annual EXPO. We had over 40 vendors thanks to the hard work of Ken Sheppard who has handed the torch to Ray Anders for EXPO 2010 (save the date! January 29). KCFA participated in over 14 different events in the community this year. We went from drinking beer at the Brewfest to the peaceful gardens of Paleaku, several parades (Calendar Girls) and the cultural festival of course. Speaking of the cultural festival, the Calendar Girls won 2nd place in the grand parade. Jenine Boido, aka Miss February, pulled the KCFA coffee shack with her weed controlling tractor! A community and judges favorite!! And can you believe it, we're still selling calendars. The cultural festival events and banquet brought in over \$11,000 to our treasury.

We also invested in new logo merchandise. We have two new shirts - a long sleeve brown "official coffee picking shirt" with our "Get Real" on the back, and blue map shirts that outline the Kona coffee growing region on the front and names the Kona coffee growing communities on the back. We now have a mouse pad that says "100% Kona, 100% delicious". We made our December calendar picture into a 4" X 6" holiday card, and we have new caps, several styles of coffee earrings, and a new canvas/burlap tote bag.

A special thanks goes to Kathy Wood for always being ready and willing to help, I could not have done it without her help. And to Cea Smith for helping with the purchasing of new logo merchandise, Christine Sheppard for making and ordering our new holiday cards, Kathy Rement for showing me how to make earrings, and Sandra Scarr for helping sew the tote bags! Maybe we should call this committee Events and Arts & Crafts :->

All in all, we had a very successful year and I'm looking forward to working with our cheerful, loyal, tireless volunteers again next year.

Web Committee – Cea Smith

I would like to thank Bruce Corker who as the other Committee Member gives thoughtful and meaningful advice, and to Valerie Finch in Georgia who is our always cheerful, never daunted programmer. We are continually working on improving our KCFA site, keeping it fresh and active and worth re-visiting.

We have 163 Farms listed on our Buy Direct Listings and they are generating Sales. Last month alone, we had over 5,000 visits to our website , over 13,000 pages viewed.

We have our What Is Kona Worth page ongoing, you need to Log In to see it in the set of Red buttons above our logo. Check out the prices around town. Peek at our new Electronic Scrapbook with its 2 postings. We'll update it year round.

PR Committee – Cea Smith

I would like to thank Christine Sheppard for giving us The Independent Voice which is our best PR and goes out to all County and State politicians, all KCFA members and other lists we have accumulated, and to Mary Lou Moss and Bruce Corker for their continuing insight.

The Committee has placed ads for the KCFA - pointing to the Buy Direct Listing in the West Hawaii Today and in a small Google ad, directed to this time of year when Kona Coffee gift giving is at its height.

GrainPro – Joanie Rowe

GrainPro Bags have been a real boon for the Kona Coffee Farmer. After a year and a half of testing, thanks to Chuck Moss, our association has secured the distribution of GrainPro bags, and we have sold 2538 bags.

Before we made the commitment to be the distributors here in Hawaii we needed to make sure this was in the best interest for our farmers.

I have been using them since 2008 and I can testify that they work like a charm. I put my coffee into the bags at 11.0-11.5% and the moisture is 11.0-11.5% when I take it out months later.

Moisture is the enemy to the coffee farmer. GrainPro bags are the answer. These bags stop moisture from getting into your coffee crop while it is stored.

For those of you who haven't heard about GrainPro you need to know that they are your storage answer to the perfect cup of 100% Kona Coffee. We offer them to our members for \$3.00 per bag and non-members \$3.65. Many of our members have taken advantage of this price and store their coffee in the GrainPro bags.

Education – Colehour Bondera

Many thanks are due all around for making the KCFA Education Committee efforts bear fruit in 2009! While I continue involvement in most aspects, it was due to the assistance from Robert Barnes, as well as encouragement and help from MaryLou Moss that moved the activities forward. Thanks also due to all of the volunteer presenters and helpers who made the workshops feasible. Finally, thanks to Joanie Rowe in her efforts to ensure that Education and Membership can be as closely linked as is viable...

While workshops covered topics from coffee pruning, to vertical selections, to drying and storage of processed beans, one character flowed through them all. That was that coffee farmers learned from and with and among coffee farmers, and that no one answer is correct!

The Education Committee seeks input from members about topics that they would like to present about and/or learn more about, so please email Colehour Bondera (colemel@kanalanifarm.org) with your thoughts! We are planning some new methods of education in 2010, and look forward to working with all members and members-to-be in order to ensure that our organization continues to use educational approaches to better enable Kona coffee farmers to both promote and protect our Kona coffee heritage.

Hawaii's Coffee Trademarks

– Are They In Safe Hands?

KCFA recently learned that a trademark of "Café Hawaii" is being applied for in Colombia, with an expiration date for a protest to the application of December 16, 2009.

KCFA immediately informed Dr. John M. Ryan, Administrator, Quality Assurance Division, Hawaii State Department of Agriculture, who, we believed, had the responsibility to defend Hawaiian agricultural product trademarks. Note that if a trademark is not defended, it is practically useless, and the trademark in question here is "100% Hawaii Coffee".

Dr. Ryan's comments are illuminating to say the least!

"... the current Hawaii law does not provide adequate consumer protection in that it allows the use of a blending marketing approach." -

"...the 10% "Kona Blends" contain Columbian and other coffees under the Kona or Hawaii names? If it is already okay to sell Columbian and other coffees under the Kona or Hawaii names, I'm not really sure what the problem is here." -

"...the Hawaii Department of Agriculture does not have the financial resources to oppose the application".

He also stated that it is the attorney for the HCA (not the HDoA) who is filing for the renewal of the trademarks, which includes the 100% Kona Coffee trademark. Talk about the fox guarding the henhouse...

We will keep you apprised of this situation in the next issue.

Footnote: In the process of pursuing this, the KCFA had had several email exchanges with members of the Colombian Coffee Federation, and we appreciate and thank them for their very helpful advice, and willingness to share with KCFA their own experiences in defending their Colombian trademark worldwide. It is an education that our own State organizations (HDoA, HCA) obviously need to undertake!.