

THE INDEPENDENT VOICE

Newsletter of the Kona Coffee Farmers Association

Holiday Issue

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Contents

Trade Expo & CBB Seminar	1
Annual Member Meeting	1
New CTAHR Extension Agent	1
Educational Events	1
Heritage Kona Coffee	1
APEC promotes Blend!	2
World of Coffee	2
Learn to Taste Coffee	2
Festival Wrap-Up	4
Letter to Editor	2
Editorial (My Swan Song....)	2
Membership Update	4
Kona Coffee on YouTube	4
<i>Editor – Christine Sheppard</i>	

Annual Trade Expo

**Services and Resources
Specifically for Small Farms
Friday January 27th, 9:30-2:30
Makaeo Pavilion, Old Airport,
Kailua Kona.**

We will be holding our 5th Annual Expo for all small farmers. This is KCFA's annual community service, connecting farmers with the vendors who serve the farmer's needs!

**SPECIAL THIS YEAR –
Do not miss our presentations
on CBB, with HDOA Chair
Russell Kokubun.**

Head of our Pest & Disease Committee, Bob Smith, has organized presentations on the Coffee Berry Borer situation. Presenters include Suzanne Shriner, Dr. Skip Bittenbender and Russell Kokubun, Chair of the Hawaii Department of Agriculture. Come and find out all the latest, and essential, information about the fight to combat this invasive pest, best practices and management for your farm, and where you can get additional resources. Questions? call 328-8060 or bob@smithfarms.com

**Vendors and Informational
Displays include resources for:**
Printing, Art & Copy Services
Marketing Expertise
Farm Machinery
Specialized Coffee Equipment

Fertilizer & Supplies
Shipping, Mailing & Supplies
Packaging for Coffee
Seed and Plants
Irrigation
Testing and Testing Supplies
Animal Supplies
Government Organizations
Fruit and Crop Organizations
Rural Development
Equipment Rentals
and more....

Admission is free to all.
Questions? call 329-4035 or
Marylou@cuppakona.com

**Annual Member Meeting
Makaeo Pavilion, Old Airport,
Kailua Kona, Friday January 27th
at 3 pm, following the Trade Expo.**
Meet the Board that has worked so hard for you in 2011, and vote (members only) for your 2012 Board. For Members only - door prizes and a special Buy-One-Get-One Free on purchase of Seals and Award Stamps; special discounted prices on KCFA logo merchandise. Renew your membership now - see the special item on our new Membership deals at the end of this Newsletter, available only until December 31st. We need your support in 2012!

Letter to KCFA...

On November 20th, KCFA held a Beach Picnic potluck with our new CTAHR extension agent Andrea Kawabata.



Marylou Moss, VP of KCFA, with Andrea

Hi guys! Thank you so much for the warm welcome, the basket of wonderful coffee goodies, the lei,

and for hosting the potluck get-together!!! I had such a great time there meeting new farmers and catching up with those who I've met along the way.

I look forward to being of service to you and I will try my best to help you battle the little beasts (and any other bug, disease, growing problems).

Please don't hesitate to make an appointment with me for a farm visit.

I hope to see you all soon. Thanks again and keep up the good fight!

Sincerely, Andrea

Educational Events

COFFEE TALK - First Wednesday of the month, 3:30-5 at Yano Hall, Captain Cook, unless otherwise noted. For more information contact Paul Uster: brun0-kcfa@usa.net

Wednesday, December 7th
Tax Planning for Farmers

January 11 –at Mt Thunder's Kainaliu facility, mauka of the highway. 3:30-5 pm. Trent Bateman and a KCFA member will host a tour of the facility in Kainaliu, and explain the KCFA member discount and rebate program.

Heritage Kona Coffee

The KCFA issued a Position Statement & Resolution on 15th November, affirming that heritage Kona Coffee is Coffea Arabica V. Typica (Kona Typica), and encouraging all Kona coffee farmers to cultivate the true heritage coffee and not risk its cross-pollination with other varieties (read the resolution online at konacoffeefarmers.org).

A mainstay of the KCFA's mission has always been to protect and defend the Kona coffee heritage. For more than 100 years Kona Typica has been the predominant variety of coffee grown in the Kona region and this flavor profile is what coffee drinkers associate with the name Kona coffee, our heritage crop.

Donald Schoenholt, a founding member of the Specialty Coffee Association of America (SCAA) and long-time KCFA member, stated “The heritage coffee of the Kona coast is Coffea Arabica V. Typica, and it is fair and reasonable that the [KCFA] say that. It is also true that other cultivars grown in Kona [technically] are also Kona coffee, just not ‘Heritage Kona’”;

It is Typica that makes Kona, Kona; the cupping quality and the history. Avoid other varieties however much you are tempted by novelty! When you see plants for sale, ask the grower if they are produced from Kona Typica stock, uncontaminated by other varieties. Keep Kona Kona!

APEC Short-Changes Kona Coffee!

Sophie Cocke at Honolulu Civil Beat wrote a scathing critique on the APEC 2011 Hawaii (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) held at the Honolulu Convention Center last month. Titled “**Watered-Down Kona Coffee at the Convention Center**” it explains that the event was all about showing off the best of Hawaii to APEC’s dignitaries. So why were they serving Kona Blend to the press?

Civil Beat asked Ilihia Gionson, a representative from the Big Island what he thought about APEC showcasing the blend. “I don’t know man, I have to talk to someone about that. Like, for real,” he said. “Because if they are serving the blend and that is something we don’t like – because we don’t like the blend, right. Although APEC is all about cooperation and blending, so maybe that’s part of it.”

Fortunately, the County of Hawaii’s booth was serving free, 100 percent Kona coffee. Once again, our County respects our products, but our State does not!

Sophie’s full report can be read at <http://apeclive.blogs.civilbeat.com/post/12664377906/2-25-p-m-watered-down-kona-coffee-at-the-convention>

World of Coffee

Costa Rica has designated its coffee as a unique Geographic Origin product, lifting it to the category of “prestige” coffee. The seal will certify that the coffee was grown in Costa Rica, contains no beans from other regions, and designates that the air, climate and soil of Costa Rica produce particular qualities unique to the region. This new status was compared to descriptions of wine that identify certain ones as from designated origins.

Isn’t it about time the U.S. offered the same protection to Kona coffee?

Jamaica and Guatemala

The Competitive Coffee Enterprise Project (CCEP) between Guatemala and Jamaica, and funded by the Common Fund for Commodity (CFC) and the International Coffee Organization (ICO), was launched in July, 2010. The project gives assistance with things like fertilizer, seedlings and grants, and is funding Coffee Festivals at various cooperatives. Central St Catherine Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Ltd, one of three such organizations in Jamaica benefiting from the CCEP, will hold their festival on December 2nd. The others are the Frankfield Coffee and Cocoa Co-operative in Clarendon and the Cave Valley Multi-purpose Co-operative in St Ann.

Several coffee producers and other entities will showcase various products that can be made from locally produced coffee. Farmers who were reluctant to register with co-operatives have been coming forward when they heard about the objectives of the project.

Under the ICO/CFC program, around 400 High Mountain Coffee farmers are expected to benefit from loans and grants valued at \$1,187,500. The money is being provided under a joint-venture agreement between the governments of Jamaica and Guatemala and is to be used to improve the competitiveness of the farmers, enhance the administrative capabilities of the selected cooperatives, and encourage greater consumption of Jamaican coffee.

Coffee Tasting

An interesting article contributed by Hula Daddy Kona Coffee – edited for length, the full article can be found at huladaddy.com.

How to Educate Your Palate

When we first became coffee farmers we were invited to a blind coffee cupping. The choices were five different Kona Coffees and Folgers. Everyone else knew immediately which cup had the Folgers - except me. What I know now, but didn’t know then, was that I was a coffee **drinker** not a coffee **taster**. My coffee farmer friends had been slurping coffees to determine the quality and the defects.

Now I can pick out the quality coffee from the defective coffee. You have to learn to **taste** coffee and the only way to do that is to compare two or more coffees side by side.

Easy Steps to Learning to Taste Coffee

1. Buy Two Very Different Coffees. Pick a heavy coffee like a Sumatra and a light coffee like a Colombian. Both should be medium roasted.
2. Brew Both of Them Do them both at the same time. Two french presses work best.
3. Let the Coffees Cool Hot liquids mask their flavors. Letting the coffee cool a little will make it easier for you to actually taste the flavor in the coffee.
4. Taste One Coffee Then the Other Go back and forth between the two cups sensing the differences. Slurp the coffees strongly so you can taste the coffee in the back of your mouth.
5. Start with the Easy Flavors First, look for sweetness. A good coffee should be pleasant to drink, not bitter and not sour. Coffee beans have natural sugars in them that are caramelized in the roasting process. You should be able to detect at least a slight sweetness in the coffee. Second, look for general tastes such as fruit or vegetable. If you taste fruit at this point you don't need to say if it is apple or apricot. Thirdly, look for mouthfeel, the texture as perceived in the mouth. Swill the coffee around in your

mouth. Is it light, heavy?
Finally, look for acidity - the tingly sensation around the edge of your tongue. We like some acidity in our beverages. Good coffee has some acidity that brings out the other flavors. See if you can identify it. If it tastes like battery acid it is not good!

Don't worry, no one starts out at the top. If you can identify any flavor you are doing great. As you keep trying, you will start to get more flavors like nuts, chocolate, and spices.

How often should you actually taste coffee? Whenever you get the chance. However, be warned that the danger of an educated palate is that it lessens your choices!

Ed. Note: Tasting coffee is a MUST for all coffee farmers. Sherri Johns of Wholecup Coffee Consulting LLC, a renowned cupper and judge at the Kona Coffee Festival Cupping, will be coming to KCFA in January to teach farmers how to cup their own coffee to make sure they are producing a quality cup of coffee.

Festival Wrap Up!

Another fun and successful Kona Coffee Festival is over. The KCFA booth at the Holualoa Coffee and Art Stroll attracted lots of visitors...



Photo by David Case

KCFA participated in five different events, and made a total of \$4484 to put towards our important work. Our thanks go to the team of dedicated volunteers who staffed our booths, walked in parades, donated coffee and so much more.

And continuing on the “thank you’s” KCFA president Colehour Bondera presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Karen Kemp for her invaluable contributions to the Association in 2010-2011



Karen worked ably and diligently as our Acting Treasurer in our time of need and she kept our finances straight and accounts balanced.. Mahalo nui loa, Karen!

Letter to Editor

Thank you for the fascinating and revealing “David & Goliath” article in the September 2011 Independent Voice. It is indeed important to recognize that we Kona coffee farmers are very much the “David” to the corporate “Goliath” of the *Topa Enterprises/Paradise Beverages /Hawaii Coffee Company* conglomerate — and to recognize the muscle being exercised by that “Goliath” to keep the Hawaii Legislature from changing the 10% Kona blend law.

We should also keep in mind that the dedication and persistence of coffee farmers and the KCFA is bringing modest, but significant, progress toward reducing misuse of the “Kona Coffee” name in a number of areas:

The decision this August by Safeway to change its deceptive “Kona Blend” labeling in response to the KCFA call for a boycott is only the most recent example. Other positive steps resulting from the work and efforts of Kona famers include:

- Meadow Gold’s agreement in 2007 to switch from using 10% Kona blend to 100% Kona as the coffee flavoring for its “Kona Coffee Ice Cream”.
- McDonald’s 2008 decision, following a KCFA complaint to the HDOA, to change the wording of TV and radio ads which had described its 10% blend as “Kona

Coffee”.

- Starbucks’ decision in 2009, at KCFA’s request, to cease selling its “10% Kona Blend” in Hawaii.
- In 2009 in response to a KCFA complaint, an HDOA inspector determined that Hawaii Coffee Company’s use of the words “Gourmet HAWAIIAN COFFEE” on a box containing packets of 10% Kona blends violated the state labeling law. After the HDOA determination, HCC changed the labeling on the box.
- Costco — at our request — switched to 100% Kona Coffee roasted in Kona (rather than roasted in Maui), and then in 2009 agreed to add in large print the words “10% Kona Blend” to the shelf labels for the Hawaiian Isles’ blends.
- Jack in the Box in 2009 — shortly after inquiries from the KCFA about the source of coffee flavoring in its “Kona Coffee Shakes” — discontinued selling this product.
- Cougar Mountain Baking Company in 2010 cheerfully agreed to switch from generic coffee flavoring to 100% Kona for its “Kona Mocha Chocolate Chip” cookies when KCFA suggested it do so. These cookies are given by Alaska Airlines to passengers on flights to and from Hawaii.

Even “Goliaths” and legislatures are sometimes swayed by arguments appealing to reason, or to fairness, or to the law. Persistence is the key.

Bruce Corker, Holualoa

Editorial (final...)

I have edited this monthly newsletter since February 2006, and the Kona Coffee Council newsletter for several years prior to that. That’s a lot of news! But, sadly for me, this will be my last edition. I have been living on the mainland now for nearly two years, removed from the day-to-day issues that affect my coffee farmer friends, and I do not feel that I can do the issues justice anymore.

As the Letter to the Editor above clearly states, coffee farmers have orchestrated a lot of changes, both in attitudes and in actions, and I like to

think that this newsletter contributed in a small way to these successes, by stirring up issues, and reporting on abuses. There are two issues that are very close to my heart, and I hope you will indulge me reviewing them.

GMO - Back in the spring of 2002, I was President of the KCC and on the Board of the HCA. I was invited to tour the CTAHR Research Station on Oahu, where I found that researchers were actively experimenting with genetically modified coffee, to plant in test plots at the CTAHR Research Station in Kainaliu.

I was immediately alarmed. I knew that GMO coffee was not marketable to Europe, Japan and many parts of the US. I suspected that GMO coffee on our island would pollinate with, and contaminate, our Kona variety. I brought the issue to the KCC, and we passed a Resolution opposing GMO coffee in Hawaii County. We formed alliances with other organizations and with enormous help from them, convinced Councilor Nancy Pisicchio to bring a Resolution before the Hawaii County Council for a moratorium on GMO plantings.

The Resolution was vigorously opposed by researchers, and those with a vested interest in GMO seed and corn. With great help from Councilor Julie Jacobson, the resolution was reworded to an advisory and passed by the County Council in September 2002. Although not the moratorium we hoped for, it was the **first such legislation questioning the use of GMO crops in Hawaii.**

Shortly after, I was laid low by cancer for three years. The torch was taken up by others, and after six more years of valiant struggle, the County Council on 10/8/08 passed Bill #361 restricting release of GMO coffee in the County by a vote of 9-0. Nearly six hours of testimony came from 93 people. KCFA members worked tirelessly with HawaiiSeed and other concerned citizens. Hawaii County Council has the courage to support its farmers – I thank them. Our State Legislators could do to learn from them!

We all know the economics of coffee farming in Hawaii. We are the only

non-third-world country producing coffee. The only place with fair wages, U.S. land prices and operating costs. If some terrible pest or disease should wipe out our heritage crop, GM-coffee could not help us because it would not sell at the high niche price we need to survive.

And talking of pests and diseases, here is an issue we failed on, one that I believe has caused the greatest harm to our heritage crop - the banning of green coffee imports... with its inherent risk of bringing in coffee rust and coffee berry borer.

I wrote my first article on the dangers in November 2003. In October 2010, just a week before CBB was found in Kona, our lead story discussed the problem of CBB coming in and again asked for a ban on green imports. This was the **eighth** article on the subject in The Independent Voice. Your Editor was beginning to think that people could not stand another one, but the issue is SO serious that I beat the drum yet again. Now our fears have been realized.

The duty of the HDOA is to prevent introduction and spread of pests and diseases harmful to Hawaii agriculture. According to its own website the HDOA's Plant Quarantine Program began over a hundred years ago when, in 1888, King David Kalakaua decreed that in order to protect the coffee industry in Hawaii, new coffee plants would not be allowed into the islands. Yet it has for years ignored our requests for a harder, longer look at green imports.

The introduction of CBB into Kona is surely the inevitable result of the HDOA's support of importation of millions of pounds of foreign green coffee beans each year into Hawaii by the 10% Kona coffee blenders. The HDOA does not deny that this is the overwhelming probability. Yet it has failed to establish practices to prevent similar introductions (eg: coffee rust) in the future.

What is needed is a **ban on imports of green coffee**, before additional damage is done – **If not this, then what? If not now, then when?**

I cannot finish without reminding everyone of our wonderful **Naked**

Truth coffee farmers calendar. Such a splendid promotion, and so much fun to do! The eleven brave ladies who bared all, and allowed me to edit their photos (photography donated free by Sue Dabritz of Seapics.com) will never be forgotten by me, and remembering this great project still brings a smile. Thank you all.

Christine Sheppard - Editor

Membership Drive!

Renewal Time is Here!

KCFA is proud to be the LARGEST group of Kona Coffee Farmers bar none with 320 members, more than 250 of whom are active farmers!

Enjoy the KCFA Membership Special of 3 years for the Price of 2 Years! Good until December 31, 2011. Renew now, save money and support your KCFA's good work!

HOW? Go to

www.KonaCoffeeFarmers.org and click on the gray **Member Information/LOGIN** button. Sign in with your **Username** and **Password**. Don't have it? Email info@konacoffeefarmers.org and we'll get it back to you **asap**.

Please renew early before the really busy season is truly upon us!

NEW MEMBER?

Become a voice for your community. Join online at konacoffeefarmers.org/join.asp Your membership will be confirmed by email or phone.

See Kona Coffee on YouTube

Al Jazeera's Patty Culhane reports from Honolulu on how the U.S./Asia Free Trade agreement could affect Kona coffee exports

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BEi2JZib4AQ>

And On Facebook

KCFA has a Facebook page, <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Kona-Coffee-Farmers-Association/224424554259950>

Check out the latest news