

# THE INDEPENDENT VOICE

Newsletter of the Kona Coffee Farmers Association

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<i>Editor - Christine Sheppard</i>	

## We Won!

### 100% Kona Coffee has won the International Parmigiano-Reggiano Award!

The award is presented every two years for top quality foods that represent a geographic origin, and work to protect it from piracy. The European Union is working to extend protection under the World Trade Organization to all "geographical indicators", the prestigious names of foods located in places such as Champagne and Parma, to stem the booming trade in counterfeit goods.

"The prize is a symbol of solidarity towards Hawaiian producers and of a shared battle aimed at eliminating all imitations," Leo Bertozzi, director of Italy's Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese consortium which assigns the biennial prize, said in a statement. They chose 100% Kona Coffee to honor our struggles against the 10% Kona blends usurping our name.



*Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese and 100% Kona Coffee on display*

The award was presented October 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Salone Del Gusto in Turin, the huge international food expo that draws over 150,000 visitors. Colehour Bondera, vice president of the KCFA, accepted the award on behalf of our coffee farmers.



*Colehour accepting award from Giuseppe Alai, President of Parmigiano-Reggiano*

As Kona coffee farmers are at a stalemate in getting protection from the Hawaii State Legislature, KCFA has been working towards national and international recognition of our Origin status. Colehour, along with KCFA President Bruce Corker, was instrumental in establishing KCFA's membership in oriGIN, an international NGO based in Geneva, dedicated to establishing a geographic origin definition which creates new economic protection for farmers, and guarantees the global consumer will recognize the real value of a product.

"This award opens the door for Kona coffee farmers and marketers to pursue an international seal of Protected Designation of Origin, such as the European Union offers at this regional level," said Colehour. "Such international certification would open up markets in Europe and Japan. This is also relevant at the national level for product recognition."

This international award draws the U.S. further into the realm of protected-origin products. The U.S. has a poor record of protecting its origin food products. Currently, Napa Valley Wine is the only one with internationally recognized PDO. The award is a symbol of support for Kona coffee farmers and recognizes their decades-long struggle to keep marketing under the Kona name to

mean 100-percent Kona coffee, not 90% foreign coffee blends.

"For Kona coffee farmers, this recognition adds fuel to a long, distressing fight to get protection at our state and national levels from misuse of our name, especially with 10-percent blends," said Colehour.



*Speakers at Award Ceremony*

At the Award Ceremony, Leo Bertozzi, introduced several speakers. Massimo Vittori, Secretary General of oriGIN spoke about the importance of Origin products. Piero Sardo of the International Slow Food Foundation of Biodiversity spoke about Slow Food's Presidia, protected products that Slow Food supports and invigorates to bring them back from the brink of extinction.

Colehour then spoke about Kona Coffee's terroir and artisanal processing as well as our struggles with Blends, GMOs, and Green Coffee imports. Giuseppe Alai, President of P-R introduced the award and spoke passionately about the similarities of Parmigiano-Reggiano's struggles with imposter cheeses using their name and 100% Kona Coffee's struggle with 10% Kona Blends. Then he presented the award to Colehour.

The KCFA plans to seek an international certification of PDO. Then consumers in the U.S. and internationally will be absolutely clear which product is 100% Kona Coffee. This will increase sales for our Kona coffee farmers, and give our State Legislature necessary education about how other regions protect their origin products and the benefits gained from doing so.

## Blends May Violate Fair Trade Law

Kona coffee farmers can take good lessons from a significant case. In September a Los Angeles federal court found juice maker Welch's in violation of the Lanham Act, a federal fair trade statute. *Pom Wonderful v. Welch Foods, Inc., Case No. 2:09-cv-00567.* The jury determined that Welch's intentionally misled consumers with false and deceptive labeling on its "100% Juice White Grape Pomegranate" product. This fruit juice blend contained less than 1 oz. of pomegranate juice (an expensive, high-end juice) mixed with more than 63 oz. of cheap apple and white grape filler juice. **Sound familiar?**

The court rejected Welch's request that the case be dismissed because it had met the requirements of all applicable labeling laws. In a critical ruling, the judge ruled that **compliance with labeling laws is not a defense to a Lanham Act claim of deceptive marketing.**

The jury agreed with consumer witnesses who testified that Welch's advertising and labeling had misled them into believing the product contained large amounts of pomegranate juice.

President Matt Tupper of Pom Wonderful, who filed the lawsuit, sees the verdict as "a clear win for consumers who are constantly bombarded by deceptively labeled products." They demonstrated that the Welch's labeling, which features large prominently placed images of pomegranates on the front label, was intentionally designed to trick consumers. Tupper says that Pom Wonderful is proud to be an "advocate of honest labeling, and we hope the evidence in this trial sends a clear message to packaged food manufacturers that it is time to be fully transparent with consumers about what their products contain."

After years and years of asking the Hawaii Legislature to stop deception in the marketing of "Kona Blends", it may be time for Kona growers to focus on federal fair marketing and consumer protection laws.

## Hana Hou Says It's True...

*Extracted from an article by Jesse Katz in the Oct/Nov Hana Hou! entitled "Adventures in Coffeeland"*

"... the practice of blending, a euphemism for diluting Kona beans with cheap imports. Throughout the Islands, in resorts and restaurants, snack bars and knickknack marts, you will find these imposters - Kona Sunrise, Kona Paradise Roast, Royal Kona Mountain Roast - none of which contains more than 10 percent Kona coffee. The only requirement under Hawaii law is that such products be labeled a "10% Kona blend," a cryptic phrase that fails to convey the bigger truth: A Kona blend is a 90 percent non-Kona product, usually beans from Colombia and Brazil.

Still, if no Kona flavor can be detected in a "10% Kona blend" — the equivalent of maybe five Kona beans per cup — it is hard not to think of blending as anything but a ruse, a terroir bait and switch. When Jack in the Box added a Kona Classic to its Mainland menus earlier this year, the fast-food chain's press release trumpeted the fact that "real Kona coffee beans" would be part of the blend. In other words, mostly not real Kona coffee beans.

## Crop Insurance

Dr. Stuart Nakamoto of CTAHR, is urging farmers to take advantage of the USDA-RMA crop insurance programs for 2011 before the December deadlines. Stuart can be contacted at 956-8125 or [snakamo@hawaii.edu](mailto:snakamo@hawaii.edu).

"... growers who do not sign up for USDA-RMA crop insurance will not be eligible for USDA-FSA disaster assistance," said Stuart. "Is it worth the trouble? .. this month I talked to a couple of coffee growers who received \$2,000-\$3,000 in assistance from FSA. It had cost them \$30-\$50/year plus their time and effort to sign up and do the required recordkeeping & reporting.

I don't know at this time if CBB damage would be covered by Federal

programs, but what I can say is that if it is covered, growers who do not sign up will very likely NOT get assistance."

## CBB in Action!

Just in case you haven't seen one, here is a photo showing a coffee berry borer attacking green cherry.



*Photo courtesy of Lee Patterson.*

## Festival Time!

KCFA prize-winning fund raisers Mary Lou Moss and Kathy Wood are in full swing for the Festival Events. Helpers are needed! Contact Mary Lou at [Marylou@cuppakona.com](mailto:Marylou@cuppakona.com) or 329-4035 to volunteer just a little piece of your time.



*Fancy & Parchment – look for these cute Kona Nightingales, the work of superb wood artist Jim Keenan, in the KCFA Lantern Parade entry.*

Events: run from Friday November 5 to Sunday November 14th  
5<sup>th</sup> - Lantern Parade in the evening  
6<sup>th</sup> - Holualoa Coffee & Art Stroll  
10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> Cupping Competition  
13<sup>th</sup> Grand Parade & Hale Halawai  
14<sup>th</sup> Banquet and Annual Auction at the King Kamehameha Hotel, our biggest fund raiser of the year, with many great donations to bid on.

## Membership Corner

Join, or renew your membership now. Please contact [joanierowe@rowesviewcoffee.com](mailto:joanierowe@rowesviewcoffee.com). Or send a check payable to KCFA to KCFA Treasurer, P O Box 5436, Kailua-Kona, HI 96745.