

# Hawaii Cooperative of Organic Farmers - HICOF

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<http://www.hicof.org>

“From Farm To Fork”

# HICOF

- Background – Why HICOF – For Farmers
- Mission and Goals
- Accomplishments
- Other Goals
- What it is – Structure
- Why join – Member Benefits
- Summary & Questions

# Organic Farmers

- **Who/What we are – Traditional Legacy**
    - Small in size, Large on Idealism
    - Anti-establishment, Anti-Gov't, Earth Friendly
    - Spiritual vs Economic Motivation
    - Hate Change, environment of the 60's
  - **Changing Environment – Modern**
    - Economic Motivation, Entrepreneurship
    - 2002 USDA NOP – Defines and Owns Organic
    - Most Regulated Farmers ([ams.usda.gov/nop/](http://ams.usda.gov/nop/))
    - Huge Demand Worldwide, not a niche anymore
    - Large, Industrialized = Availability, more demand
- "From Farm to Fork"

# Why HICOF – Deal with Reality

- Increased Demand: 20%-40%
  - Local, Europe, Canada, Whole Foods, Military
- Local Supply = Imports = 90% = Invasive Species:  
one 20 lb box = 36/19 = LOCAL OPPORTUNITY
- Most Regulated: Non Farmers – Other Agendas
  - Environment, Conservation, GMO, Consumer
  - Side Benefits are now Rules ie Biodiversity
- Loss of Traditional Professional Ass'ns:
  - 2001 USDA NOP: Conflict of Interest Rules (Sec 205.501), no assist, no presence on BoD
- HICOF will Re-Establish Farm Focus
  - Farmer issues: Regulations, Research, Marketing

# HICOF - Structure

- **CO-Op: For Profit**
- **Basic Principle = Farm Focus, “o” vs “O”**
- **Member Categories:**
  - Regular, Associate, Corporate
- **Board of Directors: 5 Regular**
- **Committees:** Marketing, Scientific, Seed, Certification, Legislative, Newsletter, Nominating
- **Island Chapters**
- **Alliances:** HFBF, OTA, OFRF, Certifiers, etc

# HICOF – What It Is - What It Isn't

- IS:

- Farmer Group
- Advocate For Farmers
- On-Farm Issues: Pests, Weeds, etc
- Local Hawaii Organic
- CO-OP - For Profit

- IS NOT:

- Environment/Consumer
- Activist Against/Protest
- Non-Farm Issues: Fluoride, Development
- Indiana Soybeans
- Non-Profit

**Respect the Past, Adapt to the Present,  
Prepare for the Future**

# HICOF Mission/Goals

- **“The business of the cooperative is to enhance the business of organic farming.”**  
**Motto: “From Farm to Fork”.**
  - **Research**: apply organic science, share experience, group vs individual
  - **Marketing**: Promotion and Supply Synergy
  - **Funding**: share of the appropriation pie
  - **Legislation**: truth in labeling, Food Safety, CSP
  - **Education**: info to public, more farmers, support existing farmers and certification issues

# HICOF - Accomplishments

- **CBED Grant:** Membership & Strategic Plan
- **Membership Outreach:** mail & visit, 40 mem
- **AIP Client: Completed Strategic Plan**
- **Submit Research Grants:** Seed, neem, etc
- **Liaison:** HFBF, HARC, CTAHR, CoDel
- **HDoA:** Hawaii Organic Seed Pgm (HOSP)
- **Legislative Testimony:** Leg, 2007 Farm Bill
- **CTAHR:** Organic Position, Working Group, Bottom-up research program
- **Web Site:** [www.hicof.org](http://www.hicof.org)



# HICOF – Other Goals

- Educational Curricula: UH & State HS
- Research Agenda- Organic Component
- Labeling Organic - What Is/Isn't
- Legislative Agenda: Pro-Organic Funds/Regs
- Attend Trade Shows
- Local & Export Mkts: Consolidate Production
- Expand Business: Ag Tourism & Web Sites
- Certification Assistance to Members

# HICOF – Vision of the Future

- Major Player – Leadership by Example
- Distributor, Consolidator, Exporter
- Land Manager – Distributed Farming
- Organic Farm Center: Training, Research
- Ag Tour Sites: Coord w/ HTA and Chefs
- Organic Seed Ctr: Production & Sales
- Organic Processing Ctr: “Made in Hawaii”, Organic Li Hing Mui Mango
- E-Commerce: Direct Sales & CSAs

# HICOF – Why Join

- Organic Farmers – Only HICOF does on-farm research, marketing, recommendations,
- Other Farmers – Organic methods are less expensive, sustainable, transferable, in demand
- Consumers – input to producers, know growers
- Retailers/Distributors – Help improve distribution chain, in-store promotions
- Educators, Scientists, Researchers – bottom up program, wide open, multiple collaborators

”From Farm to Fork”

# HICOF - Summary

- HICOF fills a void – From Farm To Fork
- Farm Process-based - No Certifying, No Conflict of Interest, Little “o” vs big “O”, Common Sense Initiatives
- Research & Marketing
- Timing - Seize the Opportunity
  - Expanding markets
  - Invasive species
  - Expand Supply Side
- Membership Benefits for All: Traditional & Modern
- Hawaii needs HICOF, Organic Farmers need HICOF
- Bottom Line: HICOF needs you - Join the Effort

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