

**Hawaii
Crop
Improvement
Association**

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Oral Testimony

Hawaii Forum: 2007 Farm Bill Forum
Sheraton Keahou Beach Resort
Kailua-Kona, Hawaii
Saturday, November 12, 2005

Two-Minute Highlights: Questions #1 and #6
(See Attached For Expanded Testimony)

My name is Paul Koehler, President of the Hawaii Crop Improvement Association (HCIA). The HCIA represents seed production and research facilities operating in Hawaii. The HCIA is comprised of five member companies that farm an estimated 8,000 acres on four islands, valued at \$60.2 million in 2004/2005 (HASS). HCIA member companies employ approximately 1,000 workers.

Our testimony is in response to questions #1 and #6, which asks about maximizing our country's ability to compete in global markets, and how agriculture product development, marketing and research be addressed in the 2007 Farm Bill.

The Hawaii Crop Improvement Association supports the continuation and increased support of the 2002 Farm Bill. In particular, those sections that support:

- biotechnology research,
- mitigating trade restrictions of biotechnology crops,
- CSREES and ARS grant programs and public education about biotechnology and environmental effects,
- increased funding for land grant institutions to set local research priorities,
- continued research, extension activities and marketing support for organically grown and processed agricultural commodities

We propose additions to the 2007 Farm Bill which support:

- stricter enforcement and penalties for imported agriculture trade to prevent entry of invasive species
- level playing fields between foreign and domestic agriculture trade that weigh such things as cost of labor, safety and food handling, pesticide applications and regulations
- financial support for public/private sector partnerships to meet new demand for farm worker training in new technologies required for higher value crops
- protection of cache of State's branding of products from improper use by other countries.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony.

Representing the Seed Industry in Hawaii

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**Written, Expanded Testimony
Question #1 and #6**

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Response to #1.

Q: How should farm policy be designed to maximize US competitiveness and our country's ability to compete in global markets?

A:

- Recommend: Establish and enforce inspection and penalties for foreign agriculture trade that bring invasive species and/or disease into the United States
- Recommend: Create level playing fields between foreign and domestic agriculture trade by a system that weighs such things as:
 - cost of labor
 - safety and food handling precautions
 - pesticide applications and regulations
- Recommend: Financial support for public/private partnerships to meet demand for farm worker training in new technologies required for higher value crops
- Recommend: Protect cache of respective State's branding of products from improper use by other countries. Example: Hawaii Tropical Bananas on boxes of bananas grown in South America.
- Continue to support unjustified trade restrictions or commercial restrictions such as labeling for agriculture biotechnology
- Continue to support and increase support for programs that remove, resolve, or mitigate sanitary and phytosanitary barriers to trade.

- Within the next few years, Hawaii will lose its current structure and phytosanitary inspector position with the UH-CTAHR.
- Continue to support grants for public and private-sector projects regarding:
 - Non-tariff barriers to US exports involving issues of biotechnology, food safety, disease, or other sanitary or phytosanitary concerns
 - Developing protocols as part of bilateral negotiations with other countries on issues such as animal health, grain quality and genetically modified organisms

Response to #6.

Q: How should agricultural product development, marketing and research-related issues be addressed in the next farm bill?

A:

- Increase support of formula funding to land grant institutions to allow the local colleges to set the research priorities and agenda that is meaningful to its local agriculture communities, to include funding for research internships.
- Continue grant programs for biotechnology risk assessment research and biotechnology research on crops important for developing countries
- Create and implement public service/education programs about the safety and nutritional value of farming methods: organic, conventional and biotechnology
- Continue support of the Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems (IFAFS) with particular focus on food safety, agriculture biotechnology, biobased products
- Continue support of the Agriculture Research, Education and Extension Reform (AREER) Act for high-priority research and extension areas, with specific focus on genetically modified agriculture products, agricultural marketing via extension grants for education and outreach for organic farmers, plant gene expression and beef cattle and sugar cane genetics
- Continue a Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES) and Agriculture Research Service (ARS) grant program on the environmental effects of biotechnology, including research to help regulators develop long-term policies concerning the introduction of genetically engineered animals, plants and micro organisms into the environment.
 - Recommend: Public dissemination and public education about the research findings is essential to allaying the public's fears about agriculture biotechnology
 - Recommend: Funding for this public education should be included in CSREES and ARS grants or solicited in a separate solicitation

- Continue to support the Foreign Agriculture Service competitive grants program for research and development in agricultural biotechnology for developing countries, which include universities with an agriculture or biosciences curriculum, nonprofit organizations, or consortia of for-profit and agricultural institutions.
- Continue to support research and extension activities for organically grown and processed agricultural commodities, in particular identifying marketing and policy constraints on the expansion of organic agriculture.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. The HCIA will submit a direct, written response to the USDA for all six questions by the December 30, 2005 deadline.