

OAHU FARM BUREAU

GUBERNATORIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Written response due no later than August 18, 2010, COB.

1. In the past, there have been proposals to eliminate or dilute the functions of the Department of Agriculture. The Department of Agriculture has taken more than its fair share of budget cuts and employee layoffs within the past few years. If the State Budget continues to experience a downward trend, how will you respond to the fiscal constraints placed upon the Department of Agriculture? Where does agriculture fit in your administration's priorities?

Some of the recent cuts to the Department of Agriculture did not reflect what should be our most important priorities. For example, the recent decision to lay off agricultural inspectors may have saved money in the short term. However, in the long term, these cuts could have devastating economic and environmental impacts that will cost much more. The reduction in the number of agricultural inspectors have impacted exports and put Hawaii at risk of invasive species that could devastate our crops.

In an Abercrombie Administration, agriculture will be a priority, particularly with food security as the primary goal. It is time for an Agricultural Renaissance in Hawaii. As Governor, I am committed to initiating the effort to produce and buy local food. Producing our own food will keep hundreds of millions of dollars circulating in our own economy and will preserve open green space, traditional culture and rural communities.

2. Hawaii's farm and ranch businesses have on-going challenges in dealing with the natural elements and competing in a global economy. In your previous leadership positions, what specific agricultural issue(s) have you addressed and what was the impact on Hawaii farm and ranch businesses? If elected as Governor, what specific initiative(s) do you propose to stimulate the expansion of Hawaii's agricultural industry?

In Congress, I supported a U.S. Department of Agriculture rule change that would have allowed Hawaiian tropical fruit growers compete fairly with international growers.

Also, I supported authorizations for projects with the Army Corps of Engineers to conduct studies on repairing Hawaii's irrigation systems, which are critical for local farmers.

For the last 18 months, I talked to thousands of people, including farmers, ranchers, and entrepreneurs, to better understand their challenges. Based on these discussions and with the help of my campaign staff and volunteers, I developed a comprehensive, detailed plan on the future of Hawaii's food and agriculture industry.

I have laid out several specific initiatives to help stimulate the expansion of Hawaii's agricultural industry:

- **Preserve and start growing on agricultural lands.** We will have legislation to protect Important Agricultural Lands from future development.
- **Repair irrigation systems.** We will fix Hawaii's irrigation systems to resolve water controversies, create more opportunities for farmers and recharge ground water aquifers for potable water use.
- **Develop integrated agricultural/environmental/cultural education programs.** We will support efforts in schools to familiarize students with job opportunities in agriculture and develop scholarships, internships and other incentives for prospective farmers. Additionally, we will promote entrepreneurship training in schools, community colleges and universities.
- **Lower the costs of farming for community-based entrepreneurs.** We must take full advantage of the USDA's Sustainable Agricultural Research and Education (SARE) program, and address high cost of importing agricultural feeds so that farming can be competitive and sustainable.
- **Raise the supply and demand for local food.** The state will work with grassroots advocates and actively participate in a coordinated "Buy Local" campaign to increase use of local foods in restaurants and hotels.

3. The growth of Hawaii agriculture is highly dependent on the reduction of invasive species on high risk products being imported into the State. What specific proposal would you initiate to ensure we protect our local agricultural industry from unwanted pest and disease?

The lack of an expansive and coordinated inspection/intake process for our ports, planes and cargo, allows hundreds of alien species to enter our island's ecosystems each year. Our ecosystems have suffered as a result. Continuing to leave this threat open and relying on luck to avoid future catastrophes is unacceptable. The problems caused by alien invasive species not only impacts our natural resources, but our watersheds and water supply, plants and agriculture, shipping, commerce, business and even people's ability to sleep.

We will seek additional federal resources and invest state resources—including educational resources—into a better preventive system that will stop these problems from arising in the first place and save money in the long run.

4. Home rule has been apart of Hawaii's political system. What do you believe is the respective roles of the Federal, State, and County in regulating the many aspects of the agricultural industry?

As the only gubernatorial candidate that has been actually elected to federal, state and county offices, I have a good understanding for the roles of each level of government. For months, ranchers and farmers have been telling me that some of the problems they face are the result of political conflicts that have often paralyzed government action in Hawaii. I don't believe the roles are the problems. What we need is leadership that has familiarity and the ability to partner with all levels of government.

5. Land and Water have been a very contentious issue for Hawaii. What specific actions will you enact to ensure that land and water is available and affordable to Hawaii's farmers and ranchers?

As I noted above, we will repair Hawaii's irrigation systems. Water is Hawaii's most limiting natural resource. Our irrigation systems, built by old plantations, are inefficient and in disrepair. Key to improving these systems are the watershed improvement programs of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. These can provide significant funding if the State provides matching funds. Addressing the efficiency of water systems will offer solutions to controversies between water users, such as the on-going debate on Maui.