



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems
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By

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And

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SB 1588 SD2 – RELATING TO FOOD SAFETY

Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 1588 SD2 relating to food safety. This bill is of great interest to the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR), as we are actively involved in the food safety education of Hawai'i's agricultural producers.

Since its passage in 2011, the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) is transforming the nation's food safety system by shifting the focus from responding to foodborne illness to preventing it. The GroupGAP program was created in 2015 to assist small farms with attaining their Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification. As a result of this congressional action CTAHR Cooperative Extension has been deeply engaged in educational efforts to actively provide agricultural producers the information and tools necessary to comply with current FSMA requirements.

The GroupGAP certification is the only comprehensive farm food safety training program in Hawai'i that results in U. S. Department of Agriculture Harmonized GAP certification that is the standard most closely aligned with the Food and Drug Administration's food safety guidelines.

CTAHR's work in this area is confined to education and we have Extension agents in each county of the state who assist agriculture producers in their preparation to pass the GroupGAP certification process. Land Grant universities do not certify agriculture producers for federally mandated programs such as GroupGAP. Likewise, pesticide applicator licenses are issued by the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA), not CTAHR Cooperative Extension. CTAHR Cooperative Extension can help producers prepare for those certifications, but we cannot be the certifying organization.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure and we defer to HDOA for 1) the logistics to establish and implement the GroupGAP food safety training and certification program, and 2) the allocation of funds to the entities capable to facilitate the GroupGap certification program for Hawai'i.