

COUNCIL OF THE COUNTY OF MAUI
**PARKS AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

August 14, 2006

**Committee
Report No.**

_____ 06-93

Honorable Chair and Members
of the County Council
County of Maui
Wailuku, Maui, Hawaii

Chair and Members:

Your Parks and Economic Development Committee, having met on July 20, 2006, makes reference to County Communication No. 06-102, from the Mayor, transmitting a report entitled "COUNTY OF MAUI 2006 REPORT ON AGRICULTURE".

At its meeting, your Committee met with the Economic Development Coordinator; an Economic Development Specialist, Office of Economic Development; and a Deputy Corporation Counsel.

There was no public testimony.

Your Committee received a copy of a computer-generated slideshow presentation from the Office of Economic Development (OED).

The Economic Development Coordinator provided an overview of OED's efforts to promote the County's agriculture industry. The presentation covered the following eight topics: 1) Molokai Slaughterhouse; 2) Maui Cattlemen's Association Alternative Feed Project; 3) Maui Food Technology Center; 4) Vacuum Cooling Plant; 5) Kula Agricultural Park; 6) Hana Greenhouse Project; 7) Kipahulu Certified Kitchen and Agricultural Facility; and 8) Agriculture Promotion Program.

The Economic Development Specialist stated that the Molokai Slaughterhouse is actively seeking a manager with a business background, as well as one who has previous experience with writing grants. He further stated that the Molokai Slaughterhouse processes an average of ten head of hogs and cattle per week, and is slowly gaining popularity within the local retail market since its opening in January 2006.

The Economic Development Specialist discussed the Maui Cattlemen's Association Alternative Feed Project. Funded by a \$63,000 grant provided by the Tri-Isle Resource, Conservation & Development Council, Inc., in addition to a \$50,000 grant from OED, several feed trials were developed involving green sugarcane leaves and other dry material that will aid farmers and ranchers with feeding their cattle during times of

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drought. Although the alternative feed will require mineral supplements to increase its protein value, it is an available resource for farmers and ranchers to use. He further stated that equipment will be purchased that will enable dry materials to be baled more efficiently, thereby increasing the feed's shelf life.

The Economic Development Specialist briefly discussed the Maui Food Technology Center. The center will utilize rented space within the commercial kitchen of Lokahi Pacific in Wailuku and offer services to residents, students, farmers, and business owners in areas such as food product development, recipe formulation, food quality testing, and educational services.

The Economic Development Specialist stated that the Kula Vacuum Cooling Plant consists of two facilities that will assist in storing less-than-container-load (LCL) cargo. He further stated that coordination among farmers regarding the number of containers needed during harvest, and the set temperature of the plant, will still have to be considered.

The Economic Development Specialist discussed the status of the Kula Agricultural Park. Under an agreement with Hawaiian Commercial & Sugar Company (HC&S), East Maui Irrigation Company, Limited, and the County, the water for the park is derived from a ditch system connected to a reservoir owned by HC&S. He stated that a new water intake system would provide the park with a constant supply of water when the reservoir is shutdown during periods of emergency or scheduled maintenance.

The Economic Development Coordinator explained that the Hana Greenhouse Project will be used to grow chemical-free vegetable crops such as tomatoes and summer squash that do not typically grow well under Hana's weather and insect conditions. She further explained that some of the project's goals are to improve self-reliance and promote a healthy lifestyle for residents in the rural Hana area, and provide employment opportunities for local residents, particularly native Hawaiians.

The Economic Development Coordinator discussed the Kipahulu certified commercial kitchen and agricultural processing facility that is set to open in the next few months. She stated that the shared-use facility will emphasize the production of poi and other native Hawaiian foods, as well as be available for rent to farmers for processing and packaging their products. Grants totaling \$105,000 from the County, \$36,000 from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, \$30,000 from community fundraisers, and countless volunteer hours were devoted to this project.

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The Economic Development Coordinator informed your Committee of a new agriculture promotion program entitled "Maui County Fine and Fresh". She stated that the program is targeted to assist consumers with identifying and purchasing the County's local products, as well as encourage grocers, farmer's markets, local restaurants, and chefs to utilize the County's locally grown produce.

The Economic Development Coordinator discussed two pending agriculture matters: 1) the definition of agriculture as it relates to tax and water rate benefits; and 2) possible legislation relating to a requirement for farmers' markets throughout Maui County to display signage that indicates a product's origin.

Your Committee noted that the matter pertaining to the definition of agriculture is pending before your Planning Committee. However, your Committee agreed that consideration of this matter by the Parks and Economic Development Committee, which is responsible for matters relating to economic development, is appropriate.

Your Committee encouraged the OED to become more involved with the agriculture industry on Molokai, noting that the focus should be on supporting the needs of the Molokai Slaughterhouse and planning for future projects with Molokai farmers.

Your Committee voted to recommend filing of the communication.

Your Parks and Economic Development Committee **RECOMMENDS** that County Communication No. 06-102 be FILED.

Adoption of this report is respectfully requested.

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