



**Agricultural
Leadership
Foundation of
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THE NEED FOR LEADERSHIP: CHALLENGES OF AGRICULTURE IN HAWAII TODAY

Hawaii's future depends on urban and rural communities working together because the economic vitality of agriculture and rural communities has reverberating effects throughout our entire society. If we as a community maintain that a healthy thriving sustainable agricultural sector is an important piece of Hawaii's overall future we must continue to support those who will help us get there. We need strong, effective voices helping to show the way.

Currently Hawaii's agricultural industry faces many significant challenges. How will we move towards sustainable solutions to issues and problems that impact all of the communities in our state?

Pressures to develop agricultural lands threaten the preservation of land that must be saved for current and future farming needs. Do we save our agricultural lands for farmers and ranchers to grow food and biofuels or do we develop it for housing and tourism?

What about conservation and preservation of our watershed and its native species- of which many are of significant importance to our host culture?

Water is a limited resource. Who owns it? Who owns the irrigation systems? Who is responsible for maintaining those systems? Who gets to use the water, and how much? Where does the runoff go and how does it effect our coastal environments?

Globalization plays a very interesting role in our agriculture challenges. Individual agribusinesses can be economically viable by developing export markets. At the same time the need for Hawaii to maintain self-sufficiency with our food supply demands we develop local markets that support more food grown for local consumption. Invasive species laws affect our island import and export opportunities as well as pose serious threats to the fragile island ecosystems and the health of our crops. How do we balance these diverse needs economically and protect our land, water, crops and ecosystems?

Hawai'i residents are connected to the land. Our love of green, open spaces is in our character and is reflected in our laws. Yet development increases profits, helps meet the demand for affordable housing, and gives a boost to the economy. We must preserve agricultural and rural lands and open space.

Well-trained and effective leaders are essential for the success of any endeavor, in particular in solving complex problems. Many in our community display the capacity for leadership but need refinement and training to better utilize their skills. Independent farmers and rural entrepreneurs have extremely varied backgrounds and form a diverse group with a wide range of interests. The lack of coordinated efforts to solve their common problems, the difficulty of achieving sustainability and the lack of opportunities to study and become articulate in public affairs issues are challenges to overcome. These leaders must be prepared to continue the process of bringing people together to address key issues, such as land and water preservation and conservation, food and energy security, changing communities and globalization. These issues affect all of Hawaii communities.