



For Immediate Release

Media Contact:

Christine Brammer

Agricultural Leadership Foundation of Hawai'i

808-224-6444

Director@agleaderhi.org

COMMUNITY SUPPORT HELPS LAUNCH NEXT CLASS OF HAWAI'I AG LEADERS

HONOLULU, HI, November 12, 2020 – Eight individuals have been selected for Class XVII of the Agricultural Leadership Program, an advanced leadership development experience for emerging agricultural leaders that is offered by the Agricultural Leadership Foundation of Hawai'i (ALFH). The program, which inaugurated its first class in 1982, has graduated 185 leaders since its inception. The new class began virtually on November 4, 2020 after a six-month delay due to the pandemic. When traditional funding sources were unavailable, and travel was not possible, the program had to be re-envisioned. Thanks to the support of American AgCredit and the local community, a successful fundraising campaign raised over \$57,000 to support the program's continuation.

ALFH invests approximately \$25,000 per program participant. "ALFH persevered in its quest to empower the next class of ag leaders," stated Taylor Kellerman, ALFH President. "We believe that the program has never been more relevant and local ag has never been more important. Although we are experiencing difficult times, the community came together to show their support. The matching contribution that American AgCredit provided was key to our success and we truly appreciate their contribution to local agriculture."

According to Linus Tavares, VP Lending Manager, "American AgCredit values the importance of growing and training our present and future agricultural leaders throughout the State. We have seen the past benefits of the Agricultural Leadership Program and feel privileged to support the effort." A separate grant provided through The Ulupono Fund at the Hawai'i Community Foundation also helps support a portion of the program costs.

Over the next 12-months, participants will take part in leadership workshops and skill-building sessions, and will experience agriculture in Hawai'i and beyond through

site visits. Participants are scheduled to take part in 20 virtual seminars and 25 days of experiential learning, including a fourteen-day national travel seminar to Washington, D.C. and the state of the class' choice (to be determined).

"This group of ag leaders is ready for the challenge," according to Christine Brammer, ALFH Executive & Program Director. "They are flexible, collaborative and adaptive and they will play a key role in leading the necessary changes to Hawai'i agriculture for the benefit of our communities."

Meet Class XVII:

Amy Brinker, Kamehameha Schools – Sustainability Manager, O'ahu

Susan Collins, Bird and Bee Hawai'i - Owner, Hawai'i

Sarah Freeman, County of Hawai'i – Food Access Coordinator, Hawai'i

Stephanie Mock, Kualoa Ranch – Sustainability Manager, O'ahu

Victoria Matsumura, Hawai'i DOA – Environmental Health Specialist, O'ahu

Blair Richards, Sensei Ag – Director of Sales and Business Development, Lana'i

Umi Martin, Umi's Store – Owner, Kaua'i

Laura Rieber, No Spray Hawai'i – Farm Manager, Co-Creator, Hawai'i

About Agricultural Leadership Foundation of Hawai'i (ALFH)

ALFH was founded in 1982 in response to the major shift in Hawai'i away from plantation agriculture. ALFH's mission is to provide leadership development opportunities for people committed to strengthening agriculture in Hawai'i. ALFH provides programs such as the Agricultural Leadership Program and the Hawai'i Agricultural Conference that invest in Hawai'i's future agriculture sector.

About American AgCredit

Founded in 1916, American AgCredit provides loans and other financial services to agricultural and rural customers throughout California, Colorado, Hawai'i, Kansas, New Mexico, Nevada and Oklahoma, as well as to capital markets customers in all 50 states. A proud member of the Farm Credit System, created more than 100 years ago with the sole purpose of serving the financial needs of farmers and ranchers, American AgCredit is truly "built for agriculture".

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