

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

MORRIS M. ATTA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

FEBRUARY 15, 2023
9:00 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325

HOUSE BILL NO. 609
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairperson Gates and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 609. HB609 appropriates funds for the establishment of three full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE) inspectors to perform meat inspection services pursuant to chapter 159, Hawaii Revised Statutes. The Department supports the measure to review and update the state's meat inspection program requirements where appropriate, and restoring the state meat inspection program. The Department provides comment.

A meat inspector program supervisor or manager must also be established to operate a meat inspection program. The Division does not have the personnel resources to have one of the existing Veterinary Medical Officers or Veterinary Program Manager positions oversee this program. This is a key position.

Operating costs including equipment, vehicle, office space and supplies are also needed. Payroll and operating costs are necessary recurring expenditures.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

February 15, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON HB 609
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
9:00 AM

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice-Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 609, which appropriates funds to the department of agriculture for three full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE) inspectors to perform meat inspection services.

Federal law requires that meat and poultry sold for retail/wholesale markets be processed at a federally inspected facility. Currently, 27 states have State Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI) Programs that operate under cooperative inspection agreements with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA-FSIS). States with MPI programs operate under a cooperative agreement with FSIS and must enforce requirements "at least equal to" those imposed under the Federal Meat Inspection Act and Poultry Products Inspection Act. However, State-inspected meat and poultry products are limited to intrastate commerce only, unless a state opts into an additional cooperative program, the Cooperative Interstate Shipment Program.

Hawai'i previously had its own meat inspection program, but it was discontinued in the mid-1990s due to cuts in budget and staffing, and since then, the USDA-Food Safety Inspection Service assumed full responsibility for these obligations in the State. This means that Hawai'i facilities wishing to sell meat to retail/wholesale markets must be inspected by the USDA.

Hawai'i farmers and ranchers that raise livestock and poultry that sell directly to local consumers, restaurants, grocery stores, and farmers' markets are often challenged because they do not have USDA-inspected processing facilities available within a practical distance and at an affordable cost. A Hawai'i State Meat and Poultry Inspection Program could provide an alternative to FSIS inspection. It could help increase

processing capacity, diversify processing options and reduce processing bottlenecks, allow producers to find a local facility to slaughter and process livestock in remote/rural locations, reduce transportation time and costs, and support producers' ability to donate locally produced meat to food banks and other community feeding programs. State MPIs are often more flexible and responsive to the unique need of producers than USDA-FSIS. Under a cooperative agreement, USDA-FSIS can provide up to 50 percent of Hawai'i's operating funds, as well as training and other assistance.

In order to sell Axis deer meat, the meat must first be inspected by a USDA-FSIS inspector under voluntary USDA inspection. The USDA defines Axis Deer as a non-amenable species or exotic meat which means that the cost of the inspection is not covered by the federal government as opposed to other meats such as beef, pork, sheep, and domesticated birds. A Hawai'i State Meat and Poultry Inspection could pay for or subsidize the inspection cost for Axis Deer.

Reestablishing a Hawai'i meat and poultry inspection program will help promote the state's livestock industries. This will increase the ability to have local inspection of harvest facilities and help drive the growth of local protein production.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

HB-609

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 10:01:20 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/15/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cathy Goeggel	Animal Rights Hawai'i	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We oppose any transfer of slaughter and meat inspection from USDA FSIS to local inspection. The existing federal Humane Methods of Slaughter Act should continue to be enforced by the federal government. The costs involved would be huge whilst federal oversight does not cost the taxpayers anything. We demand that DoA provide an accounting of EXACTLY how much of our money they are willing to spend and why.

Mahalo



MAUI COUNTY FARM BUREAU

PO Box 148, Kula, HI 96790
mauicountyfarmbureau.org

TESTIMONY COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

February 15, 2023
9:00 AM
Conference Room 325
HB 609
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chair Gates and Members of the Committee:

Maui County Farm Bureau (MCFB) appreciates this opportunity to testify on this important issue. MCFB is a general agriculture advocacy organization representing farm and ranch families and organizations on the island of Maui.

MCFB strongly supports HB 609 seeking to increase Hawaii's meat inspection capacity.

Food Safety is a priority for a healthy community. Inspection of livestock prior to slaughter is a critical step to ensuring safety of our food supply. States across the nation had meat inspection capacity in addition to those provided by the Federal government. During the economic downturn, states, including Hawaii, eliminated these positions wholly relying on Federal inspection capacity.

Over the years, small ranches raising a variety of animals have become commonplace and states are realizing the need for local capacity in addition to Federal capacity. This is a link to Oregon that just restored their state inspection capacity.

https://www.capitalpress.com/state/oregon/oregon-lawmakers-approve-state-meat-inspection-to-strengthen-local-meat/article_19bd2b48-b645-11ea-95d0-8fbfd152f006.html

Maui has an axis deer problem. Sale of venison can be expanded with increased inspection capacity. This provides one of the steps needed for a long term solution.

Goat meat is becoming very popular. Commercialization of this option will require inspections.

MCFB respectfully requests your support of this measure to strengthen local agricultural operations.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our opinion on this matter. Please contact Warren Watanabe at 8082819718 if there are any questions.



COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS
Rep. Cedric Asuega Gates, Chair
Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa, Vice Chair

HB609
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Wednesday, February 15, 2023, 9:00 AM
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the four county-level Cattlemen's Associations. Our member ranchers represent over 60,000 head of beef cows; more than 75% of all the beef cows in the State. Ranchers are the stewards of over 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or 20% of the State's total land mass. We represent the interests of Hawaii's cattle producers.

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports HB609** which appropriates funds to the department of agriculture for three full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE) inspectors to perform meat inspection services.

Access to inspectors to validate safety of harvest and processing of livestock is a necessary part of Hawaii's local meat supply chain. The creation of a state administered meat inspection, and allowing for certification of local veterinarians, could increase access to inspectors that facilities can utilize, which would increase the capacity of meat that could be processed. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council supports the establishment and funding of a meat inspection program, but the state program should be supplemental to the existing federal inspection, allowing for more options for processors to choose from to get the job done. The addition of a State inspector should not be an additional requirement for inspection.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director



HB-609

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 12:38:06 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/15/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Keawe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

HB-609

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 7:13:06 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/15/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support. Thank you.

HB-609

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:53:21 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/15/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
J Ashman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill. Thank you.

HB-609

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 9:41:59 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/15/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
penny levin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

in strong support. the lack of slaughter facilities and even more so the lack of inspectors in Maui County alone has wasted more opportunities to make use of good meat than you can imagine. the lack of availability (and cost) of inspectors is one of the biggest hurdles, particularly due to the time constraints between kill to slaughter/inspection. a diversity of enterprises will come out of helping to grow our ability to process feral animal meat, from hide to meat to bone.

HB-609

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 9:46:10 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/15/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruth Love	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Will these meat inspectors be working state wide?

Will they be sending random cultures from sites inspected?