



News

Hawaii House of Representatives

November 8, 2010 – For immediate release

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Advisory Committee on Plants and Animals will meet to discuss Kona Coffee Berry Borer

Quarantine of Green Coffee Bean Importation to be Considered

Honolulu, Hawaii. The Advisory Committee on Plants and Animals, attached to the State Department of Agriculture, will meet on Wednesday, November 17, 2010 to consider one or more quarantine zones on the island of Hawaii to prohibit the importation of green coffee beans. At issue is a serious infestation of the Coffee Berry Borer in local crops reported by Kona Coffee farmers. The pest infestation was confirmed by the United States Department of Agriculture – Agriculture Research Service Systematic Entomology Laboratory.

The purpose of the meeting will be to hear testimony from the Hawaii coffee industry and, if warranted, to develop a request to the Board of Agriculture to adopt an interim rule restricting the movement of green coffee beans into the state. The meeting will be held on:

Date: Wednesday, November 17, 2010

Time: 1:30 p.m.

Place: 1849 Auiki Street, Plant Quarantine Station Conference Room, Sand Island.

Persons wishing to provide testimony may do so in the following ways:

- Via email to: Carol.L.Okada@hawaii.gov
- Via fax to: 808-832-0584
- Drop off or Mail to: 1849 Auiki Street, Honolulu, Hawaii 96819

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Oral testimony will be accepted at the meeting. Testifiers must provide a contact phone number if they wish to receive confirmation that their testimony has been received.

“It is imperative that interested parties provide testimony either in person or in writing as this will determine the committee’s recommendation to the Board of Agriculture by the end of the month,” said Rep. Cliff Tsuji (District 3 – South Hilo, Panaewa, Puna, Keaau, Kurtistown), Chair of the House Committee on Agriculture. “The coffee industry in Hawaii has a history spanning 200 years, and we don’t want to see it collapse because of our inattention to contain or eradicate the coffee berry borer infestation.”

It is unknown at this time how the coffee berry borer will affect Kona coffee yields and quality of the product. The coffee berry borer (*Hypothenemus hampei*) is considered the world’s most destructive coffee pest. Researchers estimate that the damage caused by the coffee berry borer worldwide is about \$500 million per year in a global industry worth \$90 billion per year.

Currently, there is no provision in Hawaii Administrative Rules that addresses the coffee berry borer or that restricts movement of coffee relative to this pest. An interim rule may be adopted in the absence of effective rules if a situation is dangerous to public health and safety or if the ecological health of flora and fauna is endangered as to constitute an emergency.

The Plant Quarantine Branch of the DOA has requested the adoption of an interim rule to prohibit the movement of coffee plants, plant parts, unroasted seeds, and used coffee bags out of a quarantine zone in the Kona area of the island of Hawaii, except by permit. The Advisory Committee on Plants and Animals may accept or amend the request and submit their findings to the Board of Agriculture which is scheduled to meet in late November. The committee may also reject or defer the request.

Violators, under the proposed rule, would be guilty of a misdemeanor and fined not less than \$100. The maximum fine would be set at \$10,000. The interim rule would be valid for no longer than one year.

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FACT SHEET – Coffee Berry Borer

Current Condition:

- The Department of Agriculture has surveyed about 65 sites statewide. Of these sites, 21 are infested with the coffee berry borer.
- All infested sites are in the Kona area of the Big Island.
- The infested zone includes the area from mile marker 29 on Hwy 190 (Mamalahoa Hwy) and mile marker 93 on Hwy 19 (Queen Kaahumanu Hwy), south to mile marker 62 on Hwy 11, east of Naalehu.
- In addition to the infested zone, the DOA has reports from about 100 individual farms that may be infested.
- The coffee berry borer lays its eggs in the coffee cherry and as the eggs develop into larva, the larva feed inside the coffee bean. The bean may be further damaged by secondary fungal, bacterial and insect infestation. The combined damage can reduce yield, lower the quality and destroy the entire bean.

Eradication/Control Strategy

- There are no chemical insecticides available in Hawaii that can effectively control coffee berry borer. As the pest lives inside the fruit, chemical control strategies are limited.
- While it is difficult to contain the coffee berry borer, even with the establishment of quarantine zones, the dissemination of the contamination can be retarded for many years through improved pest management practices. The pest spreads through human activity.

Coffee in Hawaii

- There are 6,500 acres under cultivation statewide, with annual production running between 6 and 7 million pounds.
- Kona has produced coffee continuously since the early 1800's and supports nearly 600 independent farms. Farms average 3 acres and only a few have 50 or more acres. Total Kona coffee acreage is over 2,000 acres, producing more than 2 million pounds in most years.
- Kauai has the largest coffee orchard in Hawaii and in the United States with 3,000 acres in production.
- Maui has several small coffee farms spanning from Kaanapali, the slopes of Haleakala, and an organic farm in Hana. Maui has a total of 500 acres of coffee planted on converted sugar cane lands.
- Oahu has over 100 acres of coffee in Wahiawa and Waiialua.