

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEXTER KISHIDA
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 12, 2024
2:00 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 312

HOUSE BILL NO. 2142
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2142. The purpose of HB2142 is to appropriate funds for costs for meat inspection services under Chapter 159, Hawaii Revised Statutes, including the establishment of one full-time (equivalent 1.0 FTE) inspector program supervisor position and three full-time (equivalent 3.0 FTE) inspector positions. The Department supports this measure and provides comments.

The meat inspector program supervisor or manager provided by this measure is essential to establish and operate a meat inspection program. This is because the Division does not have the personnel resources to have one of the existing Veterinary Medical Officers or Veterinary Program Manager oversee this specialized program. This is a key position. Additionally, operating costs including equipment, vehicle(s), office space, travel expenses, laboratory testing, and supplies such as PPE are also needed. Payroll and operating costs are necessary recurring expenditures to continue the program once active, which are estimated to be \$1,000,000.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





Email: communications@ulupono.com

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS
Monday, February 12, 2024 — 2:00 p.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports HB 2142, Relating to Agriculture.

Dear Chair Gates and Members of the Committee:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Director of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy, clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

Ulupono supports HB 2142, which appropriates to the Department of Agriculture for its meat inspection program, including one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) inspector program supervisor position and three full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE) inspectors.

Ulupono supports the State's goal to increase local food production, which includes strengthening the local livestock industry. Establishing a state meat inspection program, with dedicated resources, provides Hawai'i's ranchers with additional tools to process locally raised meat to bring to market. This program directly supports our diverse, local livestock industry, including the efforts to control the axis deer population.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i



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 12, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON HB 2142
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 312 & Videoconference
2:00 PM

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 2142, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for its meat inspection program, including one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) inspector program supervisor position and three full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE) inspectors.

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 who 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 needs 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.



MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

**HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 312
Monday, February 12, 2024 AT 2:00 P.M.**

To The Honorable Cedric Asuega Gates, Chair
The Honorable Kirstin Kahaloa, Vice Chair
Members of the committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

SUPPORT FOR HB2142 RELATING TO MEAT PROCESSING

The Maui Chamber of Commerce would like testify in **support for HB2142**.

The Chamber notes that there is a need to expand Hawaii's meat inspection capacity to fulfill local demand. Consumer demand for locally grown beef, combined with the axis deer population explosion in Maui County, created a reduced antemortem meat inspection capacity.

The Chamber would like to point out that axis deer, an invasive species that poses a continuing threat to Hawaii's environment, could provide significant quantities of meat as a protein source for nonprofit food distribution services, such as the State's network of food banks and Feed My Sheep, Inc. of Maui County. However, there is a gap between the hunters and the retailers and nonprofit services because the meat requires processing prior to distribution. For meat donation, other states such as Wisconsin and Michigan offer models that Hawaii can assess to develop processes for plan implementation and program funding, including licensing fees and other funding sources managed by wildlife agencies or nonprofits.

We acknowledge that the State's meat inspection program was discontinued in the mid-1990s due to cuts to budget and staffing mandated by reduction in force initiatives. Restoring and updating the meat inspection program will not only grow Hawaii's livestock industry but address the beneficial use of axis deer and other ungulates. Supplementing existing federal inspection capacity will also assist the livestock industry with greater access to the marketplace.

We encourage the Department of Agriculture and Legislature to look at funding to address other barriers for managing Axis Deer and creating sustainable biproducts from this source.

This bill will be one of a few major tools in controlling the over-population of Axis deer on all islands.

For these reasons, the we wholeheartedly **SUPPORT HB2142** and respectfully request it be passed to the next committee.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.

RECEIVED
Date & Time
Feb 12, 2024, 6:56 pm



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

LATE

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

HB2127
RELATING TO MEAT PROCESSING

Monday, February 12, 2023, 2:00 PM
Conference Room 312 & Videoconference

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

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports HB2127** which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for its meat inspection program, including one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) inspector program supervisor position and three full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE) inspectors.

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 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. 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.

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

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director



HB-2142

Submitted on: 2/10/2024 10:38:53 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/12/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacqueline S. Ambrose	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

RELATING TO AGRICULTURE.

Appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for its meat inspection program, including one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) inspector program supervisor position and three full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE) inspectors.



Food+ Policy Internship 2024

food@purplemaia.org

February 5, 2024

Subject: *HB 2142 Relating to Agriculture*

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

The Hawaii Food+ Policy fully supports **HB 2142**. Our Intern, Clyds Bautista Manzano, is a student at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, majoring in Public Health. He has focused most of his work on the impact of food insecurity on the overall health outcome of the community here in Hawai'i. He has immersed himself in various community outreach focusing on supporting local farmers, increasing access to local food, and building Hawai'i's need for a sustainable food system.

Allocating funds to the Department of Agriculture for its meat inspection program, including one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) inspector program supervisor position and three full-time equivalents (3.0 FTE) inspectors, is necessary—the impact of essential public health interventions such as inspectors for our meat inspection. The CDC states that meats and poultry contain salmonella and E. coli germs. We have one of the highest reported salmonella cases yearly, with about 21 incidents per 100,000 people, compared to almost 17 per 100,000 nationally. (<https://www.sharecare.com/diet-nutrition/what-need-know-salmonella-hawaii>) Consuming meats that have not been inspected can impact an individual's health outcome.

HB 2142 continues the mission of helping ensure everyone has safe access to meat by providing appropriate funds to the Department of Agriculture for its meat inspection program. Our state will continue striving for the best for our communities and implementing **HB 2142**, which will help ensure the overall health and safety of the community.

Mahalo,
Hawaii Food+ Policy Team

The Food+ Policy internship develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2024, the cohort of interns are undergrads and graduate students from throughout the UH System. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.