

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson
Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & BIOSECURITY
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**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND BIOSECURITY**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS
FEBRUARY 11, 2026
9:30 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 2155
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS**

Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2155. This bill establishes the Agricultural Statistics Program in Statute to revitalize and enhance the program. The bill provides an appropriation. The Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (Department) strongly supports the bill.

Agricultural statistics and analysis are a fundamental function of department of agriculture. Due to limited staffing, this function has not been as robust and comprehensive as the Department envisioned. Further exacerbating this has been the recent downsizing from 850 to 550 staff at US National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) that included the retirement of the one remaining NASS Hawaii based federal statistician. The Department relies on the availability of the Regional NASS Office, currently under reorganization, for support.

The revitalization of the program along with the additional staffing is key to development of a robust and resilient agricultural sector that can make informed economic decisions. In addition, the identification of key agricultural activities that will be on a structured rotation provides guidance to the program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
Wednesday, February 11, 2026 at 9:30 a.m.

By
Parwinder Grewal, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience
and
Vassilis Syrmos, PhD
Interim Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 2155 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony offering comments on HB 2155 which requires the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to revitalize and enhance the Agricultural Statistics Program to collect data on local agricultural interests, and appropriate funds.

We respectfully offer the following comments that College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR) has increased its capacity in agricultural economics with new agricultural economists and new food and agricultural marketing faculty. With this expanded expertise and the opportunity to involve Extension Agents and undergraduate and graduate students in targeted data collection and analysis, CTAHR is planning to build a center on Food and Agricultural Marketing, Business and Economic Systems. CTAHR Dean has briefly discussed with Hawai'i Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB) Board Chairperson the possibility of collaborating. DAB and CTAHR will work together to identify specific roles for each in building a comprehensive and impactful agricultural statistics program for the state

CTAHR believes that the unique climate and agricultural practices of Hawai'i make it critical to collect specific agricultural data. Accurate and up-to-date agricultural statistics are crucial for all stakeholders in the Hawaiian agriculture sector to make informed decisions, develop effective policies, and monitor effective programs that will have large and far-reaching impacts. A revitalized and enhanced Agricultural Statistics program could allow CTAHR to better respond to and serve the following needs of Hawaii's agricultural sector.

As Hawai'i strives to increase food security within the islands, having accurate data on Hawai'i's agricultural production will be key to achieving greater food security as we will need up-to-date production and consumption data. The appropriation in HB 2155 will support statewide community assets.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Chair
Rep. Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair

HB2155
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Wednesday, February 11, 9:30 AM
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports HB2155** which requires the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity to revitalize and enhance the Agricultural Statistics Program to collect data on local agricultural interests.

Concrete data allows us to understand trends and identify where opportunities for markets are. However, the state has very little data on agriculture. Revitalizes the ability for Agricultural Statistics Program to collect this data. Investing in high-quality data and establishing access to this data can lead to growing the agricultural sector as a whole, while minimizing risk for producers.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the four county-level Cattlemen's Associations. Ranchers produce a high-quality protein and are the stewards of almost 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or nearly 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





February 9, 2026

To: Chair Representative Cory Chun, Vice Chair Representative Matthias Kusch, and the members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

Subject: **HB2155**, Relating to Agricultural Statistics

Aloha,

I am writing in **support** of **HB2155**. This measure aims to revitalize the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB) Agricultural Statistics Program.

Reliable agricultural statistics are essential to making informed decisions at every level within our food system— from farmers and what they should be growing, to policy-makers deciding what bills should be passed. Looking at the Market Analysis and News Branch (MANB) reports currently, they provide a good base level understanding of agriculture in Hawai'i, based on data from the USDA's *nationwide* statistics¹. However, having statistics produced locally by DAB can give us an even closer look at the status of our food production, not basing decisions on whatever data makes it up to the national level.

I urge this committee to pass HB2155, which will help DAB produce important data for all to make informed decisions in the context of our food system.

Mahalo,
Sydney Haas & the Food+ Policy Team
#fixourfoodsystem

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 2026, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students and young professionals working in the food 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.

¹ *Market analysis and news branch*. (n.d.). Market Analysis and News Branch. Retrieved February 9, 2026, from <https://dab.hawaii.gov/add/market-analysis-news-branch/>



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February 11, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON HB 2155
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
9:30 AM

Aloha Chair Chun, Vice-Chair Kusch, 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 2155, which establishes the Agricultural Statistics Program in statute and appropriates funds to revitalize and enhance the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity's agricultural statistics program.

Reliable, accurate, and timely agricultural data is essential for informed decision-making, sound public policy, and the long-term success of Hawai'i's farmers and ranchers. Agricultural statistics provide critical insights into production levels, market trends, land use, transportation, and supply chain dynamics that affect the movement of agricultural goods within and between islands. This information is vital for producers, policymakers, researchers, and industry stakeholders as they plan operations, allocate resources, and respond to emerging challenges.

HB 2155 strengthens Hawai'i's agricultural data infrastructure by modernizing data collection, analysis, and reporting capabilities. The bill expands the scope of agricultural statistics to include inter-island transportation of agricultural products and establishes a structured, sector-specific survey schedule to improve consistency and reliability across key agricultural sectors, including crops, livestock, aquaculture, horticulture, and agricultural tourism.

HFB appreciates the bill's emphasis on confidentiality protections for producers. Ensuring that individual farm data remains protected while allowing for aggregate reporting is critical to encouraging participation and building trust in the program.

Improved agricultural data will benefit not only individual farmers and ranchers but also state and county agencies as they work to better target investments, infrastructure development, and support programs. Enhanced data collection will also support initiatives such as Farm to School, Farm to State, food security planning, and efforts to strengthen local and inter-island supply chains.

We also support the bill's directive for DAB to collaborate with partners, including the USDA, CTAHR, UHERO, and other relevant agencies and stakeholders. Leveraging existing expertise and modern electronic systems will help ensure that the program produces timely, actionable information for Hawai'i's agricultural community.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

HB-2155

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 8:22:35 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/11/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Warren Watanabe	Maui County Farm Bureau	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Maui County Farm Bureau supports HB2155, Relating to Agricultural Statistics.



Officers

Kaipo Kekona
State President

Christian Zuckerman
Vice-President

Maureen Datta
Secretary

Reba Lopez
Treasurer

Chapter Presidents

Kelii Gannet
Kohala, Hawai'i

East Hawai'i

Puna, Hawai'i

Ka'u, Hawai'i

Maureen Datta
Kona, Hawai'i

Gina Lind
Hāna, Maui

Mason Scharer
Haleakalā, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros
Mauna Kahālāwai,
Maui

Kaipo Kekona
Lahaina, Maui

Kilia Avelino-Purdy
Moloka'i

Negus Manna
Lāna'i

India Clark
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Rachel LaDrig
Waimānalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

The Hawai'i Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFU supports HB2155.**

HB 2155 establishes the critical data infrastructure necessary to modernize Hawaii's agricultural sector by formalizing a permanent Agricultural Statistics Program.

For decades, Hawaii maintained a robust system for tracking farm-level data, inter-island commerce, and market dynamics. This system provided the essential insight required for effective crop planning and market stability. However, following the severe budget cuts to the Hawaii Agricultural Statistics Service (HASS) in 2008 and 2009, many vital reports were either reduced to annual snapshots or discontinued entirely.

In hindsight, it is clear that this lack of insight has forestalled our farmers' ability for foresight. Today, as the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) shifts its focus toward national-level data, Hawaii is left in a data vacuum. Reliable agricultural data is not a luxury; it is the foundation of economic development. If we are to meet our mandates for Farm to School and Farm to State procurement, and if our commitment to food security is to be more than rhetorical, this bill must be passed. We cannot navigate toward a future we cannot see.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union

HB-2155

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 8:58:13 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/11/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Megan Blazak	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Chair Chun, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee,

As a constituent of House District 2, I strongly support the proposed measure. Agricultural statistics are an essential source of data to guide policymaking, investment, and market development decisions for federal, state, and county agencies as well as stakeholders in the private sector. Please pass this measure. Thank you.

LATE

HB-2155

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 5:46:30 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/11/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support of a robust agricultural sector in the state of Hawaii is critical to a sustainable economy and improved food security.

Improved data collection and reporting is fundamental to making good decisions and will benefit agricultural producers through out the islands. Please vote for this study.

Thank you,

Sarah Anderson

LATE

HB-2155

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 8:58:32 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/11/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Hansen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha// Please support this bill.

Mahalo

Elizabeth Hansen, Hakalau HI 96710