

HFC Committee

From: Warren Watanabe <warrenmcfb@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 30, 2020 11:01 AM
To: HFC Committee
Subject: testimony item HCF-24
Attachments: testimony feral deer HFC 113020 (2).docx

Aloha,

Please accept the attached testimony for Item HFC-24 on this afternoon's Healthy Families and Communities agenda. Please let me know that it has been received. Thank you.

Warren

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November 30, 2020

TESTIMONY

Healthy Families and Communities Committee FERAL ANIMAL MANAGEMENT ON MAUI (HFC-24)

Chair Hokama and Members of the Committee:

Maui County Farm Bureau on behalf of Maui's agricultural families and organizations appreciates your consideration of the Feral Animal Management issue. MCFB supports a comprehensive management plan for ungulates throughout Maui County.

During this time of increased awareness in the need for increased levels of food self-sufficiency, our farmers and ranchers regularly lose their harvest to feral animals. They eat scarce forage from drought impacted pastures, blueberries, pineapples, onions, pak choi, radish, persimmons, protea, and the list goes on. Negative impacts on gross agricultural production is real and losses on ag revenue is significant. It is not unusual for farmers to lose entire plantings. Blueberries from Kula Country Farms are not available due to deer.

A comprehensive strategy to manage feral animals is urgently needed. The focus is on axis deer today. Yesterday it was on feral swine. What will it be tomorrow, as we know there are feral goats, cattle, birds and others. Some areas are affected by multiple animals. If you see pigs in the area and the program is for axis deer, what is to be done? I don't think deer and pigs know they should not coexist .. they do.

Hunting and fencing is a solution. Hunting helped farmers in the Kula Ag Park, however it pushed the deer to neighboring farms. As we move ahead, a comprehensive plan is needed to maximize control of these animals on farms and ranches.

Control must be sustainable. Strategies that solely depend on County funding and cease when funding ends is not a good use of resources. This issue is not a problem with a one size fits all solution. Ranches covering thousands of acres, large scale croplands, farms surrounded by homes all need different solutions. At the same time, hunting and cultural rights need to coexist. This requires dialogue among the various interests to reach an amicable solution.

Finally, education is needed. Relocating animals for hunting or breeding to increase litter size create problems. Feral animals carry invasive species threatening watersheds that we all depend upon. Unofficial reports indicate human movement of swine into new areas as well as crossbreeding of swine to develop aggressive breeds for hunting. Feral swine on Maui and Molokai are known to have pseudorabies, brucellosis and Avian Influenza. Pseudorabies may be contracted by hunting dogs after coming in contact with infected feral swine. Widespread education is needed to increase awareness of the impacts of feral animals.

MCFB appreciates your consideration of this important issue and is ready to work with you to develop long term sustainable solutions. It is a difficult matter that will require partnerships and education to reach a community wide solution. Everyone needs to be part of the effort.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our opinion on this matter.