

# County of Maui Department of Agriculture Proposed Strategic Plan

2022- 2026

Developed By The Maui County Department of  
Agriculture Community Impact Working Group

Prepared By Jennifer Karaca

## **Overview**

The purpose of this strategic plan is to assist the Council and Administration in the establishment of the Maui County Department of Agriculture. The following recommendations were proposed by the Maui County Department of Agriculture Community Impact Working Group (CIWG) based on the needs of the agricultural sector. The proposed actions in this plan were also presented to the community in a survey. The community working group took the time to break these actions down into years of initiation in order to help guide the department as it begins and throughout the first 5 years of growth. The CIWG understands that it will take some time to hire qualified candidates, set up offices and get the department up and running and tried to be mindful of all of the work that will need to happen, to make this a reality and feels that if the Department uses this as a guide, it will be able to make the most positive impact possible for our residents.

The CIWG is not opposed to the Department hiring third party agencies to help draft plans and working to build community partnerships to develop programs and projects to help accomplish these goals and think it would be quite beneficial in the beginning phases. However, the positions listed below will be crucial in helping the department start off successfully. Our agricultural sector spans 4 islands, and is extremely diverse. The Department will need employees to help obtain outside additional funding to build capacity and dedicated staff to compile issues in the community and work to address them in the beginning phases of the Department's establishment.

## **Mission Statement**

The County of Maui's Department of Agriculture will support the development and continued management of a sustainable regional agricultural system for Maui County, to promote resident and ecosystem health and well-being and create a thriving circular agro-economic system that can be a model for the rest of the world.

## **Vision Statement**

To be known as bridge and the County's agricultural experts and resource center working to put Maui County on the map as the leader in sustainable agriculture.

## **Core Values**

1. Develop a sustainable regional agricultural system for Maui County.
2. Build the economic resiliency of the county communities by increasing opportunities in the agricultural sector.
3. Boost health and food security through ensuring access to locally grown agricultural products.
4. Promote healthy ecosystems through natural-resource regeneration and protection,

including through advising other agencies and the council on all programs and projects that affect the agricultural section.

5. Develop and implement programs to diversify and expand sustainable forms of agriculture through leveraged resources and business support.

## **STRATEGIC ISSUES**

### Infrastructure

- Need to improving access to, and availability of: affordable land, water (storage, meters, delivery systems, and prioritization), labor, workforce housing, equipment, commercial kitchens, processing and distribution facilities, and transportation.
- Need to increase community co-operatives, technology and access to locally grown food for our residents, while also protecting subsistence farming.

### Markets & Distribution

- Need to develop programs to increase the access and availability of locally grown products, locally made agricultural related products, and monetary assistance (i.e. SNAP, EBT, etc.) in order to increase food security and overall county sustainability.
- Need to increase marketing assistance and distribution channels on each island separately, as well as inter-island.
- Need to develop institutional purchasing and distribution channels, including with the Hawaii Department of Education.

### Funding

- Need to secure Federal, State and private funding, develop special funds and revolving funds to go directly toward local agriculture.
- Need to provide grants and funding to agricultural related businesses in Maui County.
- Need to provide grant writing assistance to agricultural related businesses, organizations, and community needs projects.

### Research and Development

- Need to collaborate with government agencies, research institutions, community members, agricultural groups, stakeholders and experts to gain insight and develop solutions to agricultural related issues and obtain feedback to ensure the department continues to meet community needs.
- Need to assist other Departments by providing new and up to date information that will promote sustainable growth in our agricultural sector.
- Need to collect available market and agricultural data and create databases that will allow data to be put to use by members of the community to fill gaps in the agricultural sector.

### Education, Outreach and Advocacy

- Need to improve agriculture literacy by developing programs that increase farmer, consumer, market, educator and student awareness about agriculture, regulations, and opportunities.
- Need to provide support and coordinate with educational and research programs, provide educational resources and training to ensure the safety of farmers and their families.
- Need to organize cultural volunteer programs and opportunities to provide hands-on assistance to the agricultural sector.
- Need to work as a community liaison and advocate for farmers and the agricultural sector to address concerns and gain feedback for research and development.

### Policy and Regulation Assistance

- Need to review regulations with consequences to the agricultural system and advocate on behalf of the community for change, incentives or exemptions.
- Need to provide assistance to the community when needed with county, state, and federal regulations and permitting.
- Need to create a streamlined permitting process for agriculture, and perform agricultural property inspections for all county departmental applications with knowledgeable inspectors.

### Agency Coordination

- Need to open lines of communication to build bridges within the agricultural sector, develop shared goals and visions for the county, and develop strategic plans to achieve those goals. This can include but is not limited to government, private and public agencies.

### Workforce Development

- Need to increase agricultural related industries, occupational skills training, educational opportunities, and the number of agricultural workers in Maui County.
- Need to support agricultural related businesses to allow the increase of opportunities for agricultural related jobs that compensate workers with livable wages and develop pathways to affordable workforce housing.

### Invasive Species, Pests and Threats

- Need to collaborate with the federal and state agencies to develop additional time sensitive protocols, like pre and post inspections to prevent the introduction of invasive species and additional inspections for invasive species at retail locations, via mail delivery, airports and harbors.
- Need to provide education to the ag sector about agricultural threats, such as climate change, pests and ways to prevent unnecessary imports that may introduce invasives.
- Need to provide feedback to develop policy and legislation to prevent the introduction of invasive species, combat agricultural threats and manage pests.

### Resources Regeneration and Protection

- Need to work with community organizations, County, State, and Federal agencies to provide insight and feedback on projects that affect the agricultural sector, and implement programs that ensure the sustainable utilization and/or regeneration of major natural resources, such as land, soil, water, air, minerals, forests, fisheries, and wild flora and fauna, so that our agricultural system will continue to have the resources it needs to thrive.

### Contracts and Procurement

- Need to provide assistance to promote local production and import substitution with a focus first on local food security.

### Transportation

- Need to collaborate with the Hawaii Public Utilities Commission, provide advocacy, education and resources to minimize cost and other barriers for transportation, crops lost or livestock lost in transport.
- Need to provide support for the agricultural community to access federal programs that reduce the cost of transportation.
- Need to coordinate transportation sharing to support the distribution of local products.

### Agricultural Theft, Vandalism and Liability

- Need to develop programs to educate and address liability issues and work with the Maui Police Department, Prosecuting Attorney's office, the County and State to address the losses from agricultural related theft, and vandalism.

## **ORGANIZATION-WIDE STRATEGIES**

### **2022**

- Lay the foundation for the organization
- Hire staff
- Develop the infrastructure to prepare for high growth
- Develop communication pathways within the Department as well as to the Administration, Council, Federal and State Agencies.
- Begin crucial year one actions items

### **2023**

- Continue to execute any year one actions not yet finished
- Begin year 2 actions items and the reporting process for year 1
- Continue to utilize feedback to update departmental strategy and staff to maximize efficiency, equitably.

### **2024-2026**

- Begin the standardization of all recurring processes
- Continue the action items prioritized for years 3-5
- Develop expansion of programs and divisions as needed
- Continue feedback loops to continue to develop the next strategic five year plan.

## CUSTOMER SEGMENTS

Developing programs, assistance and marketing strategies based on customer segmentation can help to detect and exploit new opportunities, improve how to predict behaviors and trends, streamline workflow, increase resource retention and can improve the perception of the department via personalization. Some examples of customer segments for the Department to utilize are as follows:

<b>Geographic-Districts</b>	<b>Demographics-Ag Operation Sizes</b>	<b>Psychographics-Activities</b>	<b>Persona-Jobs to be Done</b>
Upcountry, Northshore, Central, South and West Maui	Low-sales- Between \$1,000 and \$149,999	Farming	Agricultural Operations
East Maui	Moderate- GCFI between \$150,000 and \$349,999	Ranching	Educational and/ or Research Institutions
Lanai	Midsized- GCFI between \$350,000 and \$999,999	Forestry	Non-profit Organizations
Molokai	Large- GCFI between \$1,000,000 and \$4,999,999	Conservation	Marketing or Product Development
Kahoolawe	Very large- GCFI of \$5,000,000 or more	Aquaculture	Distribution Channels

\*\*GCFI = annual gross cash income\*\*

## Proposed Year 1 Positions

While we understand it may be tempting to only hire a few positions to start the Department the CIWG has been studying the agricultural sector needs and feels that in order to begin to address the extremely broken systems, we will need approximately 15 positions in

addition to the Director and Deputy Director to even begin to lay the framework for a successful Department. It would also be extremely beneficial to have these positions start later in the day and end later in the day, so that they have some overlap of availability during business hours and after business hours to allow for more community access. The positions that we are recommending along with brief descriptions are as follows:

**(2) Departmental Grant Writers-** The two positions will be responsible for securing outside funding to help cover the costs of Departmental programs and CIP projects that will serve large sectors of residents. In addition to securing the funding they will also be responsible for grant reporting on the funding secure and overall achievements and progress of the programs and projects. These two positions should be filled by professional grant writers who have ample experience securing large federal and state grants as well as private funding. These positions will help to minimize the use of County tax dollars to fund infrastructure and Departmental needs.

**(2) Community Needs Grant Writers-** These two positions will focus on writing blanket grants to help minimize the workloads of the individuals working in the agricultural sector as well as reporting on funding secured. In addition to writing and reporting for blanket grants they will also be responsible for coordinating efforts to provide technical grant writing assistance to the community. That can be through direct service or via community partnerships. These positions will help funnel even more funding directly to our agricultural sector in need and will better the chances of securing larger federal, state and private grants to address similar needs of stakeholders throughout the County.

**(4) Food Access Coordinators-** One food access coordinator will cover the areas of Upcountry, Northshore, Central, South and West Maui Districts with the remaining three being assigned to service, East Maui, Molokai and Lanai. These positions will help to identify the unique needs and issues in the regular food system, farm to school network and emergency food sector. They will work to begin finding gaps in products and services, assist with procurement and coordinate with the various agencies working in these areas and help to draft and develop plans to increase food security for the everyday food insecure and all residents during times of emergency. Food security is of the utmost importance and each of these areas have unique and pressing issues that need to be managed. Having a food access coordinator of these areas will help to build capacity and bridge gaps in the emergency food sector, overall food security for the County long term.

**(1) Cultural Resource Liaison-** This position should be filled by a Native Hawaiian Practitioner that is well versed in agriculture. It will be critical to the development of the Department and agricultural sector to have a position dedicated to ensuring that all programs and services are in alignment with the local culture. This will not only help to mend relations in the agricultural sector that have been damaged over many decades but will also help the Department avoid

causing any unnecessary harm, some which could result in unnecessary legal battles which could cost precious natural resources, time and taxpayer money.

**(1) Waste & Resource Regeneration Specialist-** This position will begin the framework to create waste to revenue streams and find a way to conserve and preserve natural resources for our future generations. Waste management including composting is a large area of need for Maui's agricultural community and affects everyday residents as well. This position would allow for a dedicated employee to begin compiling issues, and solutions to draft plans and get action steps in place to manage agricultural waste and precious natural resources, while also working to create new industries that can employ local residents.

**(1) Ombudsperson-** This position will serve as a liaison for the agricultural community to investigate, report and settle complaints. They will work to compile issues that are negatively impacting the agricultural sector, such as regulations with unintended consequences, barriers to workforce development, and other large and small problems and then develop plans and solutions with local, federal and state agencies to address them. Regulation and legal knowledge would be an ideal qualification for this position.

**(4) Inspectors/ Community Liaisons-** These inspectors will begin the task of creating a streamlined permitting process for the County's agricultural related permitting. The recommendation to have four inspector/ liaisons is so that Maui, East Maui, Lanai and Molokai can all have an inspector liaison. That is dedicated and knowledgeable in those areas. The inspectors will help to create the new permitting process, develop consistent inspection standards, provide education on best agricultural practices, help to connect community members with agricultural related resources and serve as a liaison to collect information from the agricultural sector on needs and issues and share that with the ombudsperson. Customer service, social work experience and knowledge of regulations would be beneficial for this position.

## **Actions Items**

The CIWG came up with the following proposed actions for the Department to work on in the first 5 years of operation. The CIWG focused on putting these actions into years based on priority and necessity. However, also realizes that many of those actions will end up spanning multiple years, so there were more actions put it to year one, in hopes to get those initiated first because they will either make the most impact, take the longest and/ or because they may need to be started before some of the actions in the following years can take place.

While it would be beneficial to break down timelines, targets, measures and costs for these specified actions, the CIWG is not trying to dictate how the County addresses these needs. Instead suggests that this plan serve as a guide and resource to assist the Administration, Council



and soon to be appointed Director and Deputy with the establishment of the Department. Since many of these actions overlap the need for Executive actions, funding and legislative changes, the CIWG feels that the Administration and the Council should work together to establish timelines, targets based on the proposed reporting requirements and financial status of the County, to achieve the best results.

The CIWG feels confident that with the cooperation of the executive and legislative branch at the County of Maui and through the utilization of grant writing, community partnerships and third party contractors these actions are realistic to begin. If the County places the proper support behind this department it will not only be able to make huge impacts to Maui's agricultural sector and community at large within the first five years. The CIWG also believes it will really show how Maui County can be a global leader when showcasing model solutions to complex global issues, such as food security.

In addition to actions there are also positions listed above for actions prioritized to start in year one. This is to suggest how it may be beneficial to break down the workload among the suggested positions. The following years did not have position recommendations because the CIWG feels that it would be best to allow the Department to reevaluate workloads each year and redistribute work or hire additional staff as needed. Utilizing feedback in all areas of work to make changes throughout the Department and its programs and projects will be crucial for ensuring the department is operating sustainably, efficiently and effectively. Please also keep in mind that these actions will need to be effective for all areas of Maui County and its residents and that is why having additional staff to serve each island is necessary to the overall success.

## Year 1

### Grant Writers/ Cultural Resource Liaison

- Develop special and revolving funds to provide funding for local agriculture
- Continue to support the ag micro-grant program
- Develop equitable grant programs to fund agricultural operations

### Waste & Resource Regeneration Specialist/ Ombudsperson

- Work with legislators to allow commercial composting as an approved Ag activity on agricultural lands
- Begin communications with State and Federal government to decrease the introduction of invasive at the airport, ports, via mail delivery and retail locations

### Cultural Resource Liaison / Ombudsperson/ Waste & Resource Regeneration Specialist

- Represent the agricultural communities voice on water issues to an develop action plan and costs, in collaboration with the Department of Water, which will address the following ag communities concerns:
  - Ensure the public trust doctrine is being upheld
  - Separate water restrictions by island

- Increase water storage via reservoirs
- Address water prioritization, delivery, water meters, and sustainable yields
- Help property owners invest in water storage tanks, rain catchment systems
- Increase usage and projected use of recycled water and allowable usage of gray water in agriculture
- Implement alternative energy generation
- Create publicly accessible water use charts to see how water is being used/ distributed
- Ensure all updated instream flow standards are being met
- Review the AG water rates and criteria for small farmers and crop donations
- Collaborate with the Department of Planning and Fire and Public Safety to address water storage for fire protection.
- Identify perennial streams and flow status
- Negotiate with State and Federal government to relax rules and regulations for the harvest and consumption of exotic wildlife (custom/personal and commercial use)
- Full legal assessment of current agricultural cross sectors with federal and state agency's to negotiate and address ag issues
- Develop the capacity for research and development within the Department

#### Food Access Coordinators/ Grant Writers

- Support the P20 State legislation to include ag, and science in all K12 programs
- Support opportunities and initiatives for community gardens and educational programs, including the leasing of county owned land
- Set up food banks in Lana'i, Hana and Molokai
- Set up up emergency storage and food centers
- Support farm to school feeding efforts

#### Inspectors/ Ombudsperson/ Cultural Resource Liaison

- Develop a streamlined County permitting process for agriculture
- Work with the Maui Police Department, Prosecuting Attorney's Office, county and state to address the losses from agricultural theft, poaching and vandalism
- Collaborate with the State to ensure real estate agents learn the zoning laws for agriculture

## Year 2

- Develop a plan to support food system resiliency
- Support countywide USDA Compliant (including livestock inspection and testing) slaughter houses, existing, stationary, mobile and Co-ops
- Support countywide USDA inspectors for processing exotic wildlife (feral ungulates, rabbits and fowl)
- Develop a management plan for feral ungulates, rabbits and fowl
- Develop programs to increase onsite farm housing
- Create database for ag businesses to be connected with available resources

- Coordinate transportation sharing to support the distribution of local products
- Develop a food distribution plan on island and inter-island for the whole county

### Year 3

- Develop and fund a comprehensive Countywide Composting system including plans to evaluate expansions to district facilities
- Develop educational programs for the Water Use and Development Plan and ag related water issues
- Support needs for cold storage and equipment
- Support needs for processing, packaging and distribution facilities
- Support needs for commercial kitchens
- Develop and support programs to increase agricultural related industries, occupational skills training, and educational opportunities
- Collect and collate the data needed for the Department, Ag sector and research needs
- Support financial assistance programs for food insecurity at farmers markets and retailers

### Year 4

- Develop programs to support local agricultural product retailers and markets and marketing and Procurement co-ops
- Develop a certification course for community members to become approved hunt inspectors for introduced species hunts for resale
- Support community nutritional and food safety testing programs
- Gather data on obstacles that prevent farm workers from being paid livable wages and develop programs and incentives to minimize barriers

### Year 5

- Develop benchmarks to begin meeting minimum local purchasing goals and implement at the county level
- Develop thresholds to transition from eradication to management of invasive species, using environmentally friendly methods
- Expand Maui, Lanai, & Molokai Food Hub Efforts
- Support farm food safety and product development programs

## APT Committee

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**From:** Jennifer Karaca <karacajy@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 8, 2022 11:18 AM  
**To:** APT Committee  
**Subject:** Fwd: Documents for Posting from the 3/15 Meeting  
**Attachments:** Presentation Strategic Plan DOA .pdf; Strategic Plan DoA (2).pdf; Bill 54 (2022) DoA Director ^0 Deputy qualifications-amended with tracking.docx; Bill 54 (2022) DoA Director ^L0 Deputy qualifications-amended clean.docx; Bill 54 (2022) DoA Director ^LL0 Deputy qualifications-amended clean.pdf

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From: **Jennifer Karaca** <[karacajy@gmail.com](mailto:karacajy@gmail.com)>  
Date: Tue, Mar 8, 2022 at 8:56 AM  
Subject: Documents for Posting from the 3/15 Meeting  
To: Shane Sinenci <[ssinenci@yahoo.com](mailto:ssinenci@yahoo.com)>, Shane M. Sinenci <[Shane.sinenci@mauicounty.us](mailto:Shane.sinenci@mauicounty.us)>, <[shane.sinenci@gmail.com](mailto:shane.sinenci@gmail.com)>, Gina M. Young <[gina.flammer@mauicounty.us](mailto:gina.flammer@mauicounty.us)>, <[alison.stewart@mauicounty.us](mailto:alison.stewart@mauicounty.us)>, Kasie Apo Takayama <[kasie.apotakayama@mauicounty.us](mailto:kasie.apotakayama@mauicounty.us)>

Aloha All,

I have attached the revised bill for the Director and Deputy Director Qualifications, 2 in word, a version with track changes and a clean version and a clean version in pdf form. Shane said we should just be able to post this version so we don't even have to deal with the previous version and any drama or confusion that may cause, please let me know if this is not the case so that I can prepare the group and myself to write testimony accordingly. I have also attached the Full Strategic Plan PDF and the presentation on the strategic plan that I will present at the meeting so it can all be posted. Please let me know that you have received it and if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you all for all of your hard work and energy on this and I hope you have a wonderful day.

Mahalo,

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