

THE INDEPENDENT VOICE

Newsletter of the Kona Coffee Farmers Association

July 2009

PO Box 5436 Kailua Kona Hawaii 96745 USA

www.konacoffeefarmers.org

info@konacoffeefarmers.org

Contents

Economic Stall Strategy.....	1
Neil Abercrombie.....	1
HCC False Labeling.....	1
Editorial - HCA New Era.....	2
KCFA at Work for You.....	2
Coffee Theft.....	2
Kona Coffee at Burke Museum.....	2
Meet and Have Fun!.....	2
Coffee for Your Memory.....	2
Get Connected.....	2
Editor - Christine Sheppard	

Economic Stall Strategy

The Honolulu Blenders are engaging in a two-part “stall strategy” in an effort to delay reform of the current “10% Blend” law. They argue there should be no labeling reform without a “study” and also that the State can’t afford to spend the money to do a study.

The Hawaii Department of Agriculture agrees - the HDoA can’t afford \$200,000 (the UH-CTAHR proposal) or \$98,000 (the Farm Bureau proposal) studies.

But wait! Is there a solution offered? Marvin Feldman, Ph.D, a resource economist and a Captain Cook coffee farmer, has sent a letter to the HDoA stating that an economic study of the affects of changing the Kona Blend minimum to 50% could be done for less than \$25,000, and that his firm, Resource Decisions, would do an economic study for that amount.

As Dr. Feldman succinctly states in his letter, “... Kona coffee blending requirements remains an important issue. It would be unfortunate if this issue is again sidelined due to funding limitations and the high funding hurdle suggested by the previous proposals. This need not be the case. While the market research aspects of the earlier proposals are interesting, they are not essential to answering the

fundamental question posed by the Legislature in SCR 102--how alternative blending and labeling requirements would affect Hawaii growers and the state economy.

My company, Resource Decisions could perform a much simpler supply and demand study that would be targeted on the policy-relevant issues facing the Legislature, notably how alternative minimum blending limitations would affect the quantity of Kona coffee sold, the price received by growers, and the effects on State revenues.”

The State’s response was “Unfortunately, the current economic climate precludes any such assessment being undertaken with State funds in the near future.”

Time for new leadership at the top? Which brings us to our next article....

Neil Abercrombie supports Truth-in-Labeling

Back in our May newsletter we reported that the KCFA had sent a letter urging that as part of the gubernatorial campaign’s “agenda for change” there be a commitment to “fix the fraud” (Sen. Clayton Hee’s words) of the current coffee blend labeling laws.

We are delighted to report his response, verbatim, from an email from his Deputy Campaign Manager, Andrew Aoki – “Just got off the phone with Neil. He’s totally on board and is certain that we can work out the details to get truth-in-labeling when he becomes Governor. In fact, he added that with him as Governor, the state will be very aggressive—will go on the offense—to protect all our Hawaii brands from being misappropriated. This is something he feels very strongly about. “

Thank you, Neil and Andrew, and our next article illustrates how serious the situation is....

Hawaii Coffee Company caught in False Labeling

Found on the shelves at Kona Walmart (and presumably many others) a package of “Gourmet Hawaiian Coffee”, produced by the Hawaii Coffee Company, HCC, of Honolulu. On the front in large type it says “Hawaiian Coffee”. On the back “Each Hawaiian island produces an extraordinary coffee that has its own special flavor. These unique semi-tropical islands provide rich volcanic soil, mild trade winds, cool gentle rains, and afternoon shade, to create ideal coffee growing conditions.” BUT, what do you get when you open the package? Three small packets of Lion brand “International Coffee Blend” and nothing to say there is even a bean of Hawaiian coffee inside!!!

How many meetings have Kona coffee growers attended where Jim Wayman of HCC has pounded the table and said how “honest” his company is in obeying the existing (and disastrously flawed) labeling laws? Well, Jim !?!

KCFA’s persistent and constant emails to the Quality Assurance division of the HDoA finally brought the message that HCC had submitted changes to the packages and these had been approved. No word of any penalty, or of whether they were asked to remove the illegal packages from the shelf while redesigning their packages.

These massive corporations have no interest in the reputation of Kona coffee, only in their own profits, and obviously are willing to ignore the existing labeling laws. Time for some laws that have REAL teeth to help protect our gourmet product.

Editorial

A New Era for The HCA?

The Hawaii Coffee Association has elected Kona farmer Tom Greenwell as its new president, replacing Jim Wayman of the HCC who had held the post for several years.

While Mr. Greenwell and the KCFA differ on several issues on Kona coffee, we have high hopes that with him at the helm the HCA will return to being a true member of the coffee community. That we can again work together on issues that we agree on, and hold civilized discussions on those that we don't. That no longer will the HCA be used as a bludgeon to suppress the views of small farmers, using the bully pulpit of money and influence.

Congratulations Tom on your new position. Let's see aloha at work.

KCFA at Work for You - Updated....

KCFA sent representatives to two important meetings that address the promotion and protection of specialty agricultural products.

KCFA member Harold Hoogasian attended the General Assembly of **OriGin**, June 24-26 in Teruel, Spain. OriGin, Organization for an International Geographical Indications Network, is working for protection of regional identities of worldwide specialty agricultural crops such as Kona Coffee, Jamon de Teruel (Teruel ham), Tequila, Darjeeling Tea, Champagne, etc

Bruce Corker attended the **Agile Ag Summit** and **U.S. Place-of-Origin Conference** at the University of Arkansas, June 30-July 2. These conferences considered regional identity protections in the U.S.- i.e. Idaho Potatoes, Napa Valley wine, Kona Coffee, Missouri Northern Pecans, etc.

Thanks to the hard work of our webmistress, full reports are online at www.konacoffeefarmers.org

Coffee Theft!

Wednesday, August 5th, 3-5pm, in Yano Hall in Captain Cook, Mitchell Roth of the Hawaii County Office of

the Prosecuting Attorney will be presenting information about this serious crime that affects growers and processors alike.

There is no charge for this event! Please come, and encourage your neighbors to come as well.

Kona Coffee at Burke Museum

The KCFA was invited to present Kona coffee at the Burke Museum, Seattle, last month, as part of their "Coffee - The World in Your Cup" exhibit. Mary Lou Moss reports: "The experience was very informal and very interesting. There was a huge room dedicated to coffee from around the world. There was a good DVD playing about the history of coffee. Most of the other exhibitors are coffee roasters or local coffee companies. Attendees were delighted to talk to actual coffee farmers to find out what all is involved in growing coffee." This was such a success, that the museum is taking the coffee show on the road and will visit other cities.



Our thanks to Mary Lou, Dexter Washburn, and Motter Snell for their efforts at this event.

Meet & Have Fun!

Our Fun(d) Raising Committee is planning a great get together for the end of August. Honaunau Bay, picnic, pot luck, BBQ. All members and family welcome. Bring your kayaks, boogie boards, swim gear. Look for details in your email soon.

Get Connected

By your KCFA webmistress
Reminder, check out [Resources](#) page, for what is available to you

from fellow KCFA members. Member Log-in 1st, with your Password & Username. (gotten easily by emailing info@konacoffeefarmers.org). See what we can offer each other ☺.

Classifieds are up to date and as a member benefit, can be placed for free & quickly by emailing **KCFA**. Let your web site do work for you!

Our **WhatIsKonaWorth** page is posted, (after your Member Log-In), so check it out. We are asking for your input - posting the various prices makes for a "more level playing field" for all Kona farmers. Support your agriculture and send in your observations.

Site Stats: The most favorite ongoing -always- search on our site is for the "Buy Direct from Farmer" listings. In the last 30 days, with more than 2,100 Buy Direct page views, 530 people made actual visits to your listings. Total Page "views" of our entire site in the last month, were over 10,300! Let us know how you're doing.

Mahalo, Cea

Remember - Coffee for Your Memory!

Our thanks to The Independent of England for this news item, <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/a-coffee-a-day-ensures-the-memory-will-stay-1732748.html>. Scientists have uncovered powerful evidence that caffeine not only helps to stave off Alzheimer's but can treat it. A team from the Florida Alzheimer's Disease Research Centre in Tampa gave caffeine to elderly mice showing memory impairment. After two months the mice performed better on memory tests than mice not given the caffeine. The equivalent dose for humans would be two cups of strong coffee a day. But there is no evidence that the caffeine boosts the memory of healthy young brains, so you can't store it up for the future.

Join or Renew Today!

Find information and join online at www.konacoffeefarmers.org