

THE INDEPENDENT VOICE

Newsletter of the Kona Coffee Farmers Association

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Kona Coffee Fair

Join us for fun and coffee on Saturday August 19th, 10 - 4 PM in the Lanihau Center, Palani Road.

Peoples Choice Tasting Competition. Sample gourmet coffees for FREE and then vote for your favorite!

Keiki fun and games. Win a pound of coffee a month for a year. Raffle prizes. Educational display on coffee. Crafts, coffee and edibles to buy. Hawaiian quilt demonstration, Plant Sale and Bake Sale. Hula. Antique gas farm engine (running!); and more... .



The Politics of Coffee

Candidate Questionnaire:

With the advent of the political races, KCFA has sent a questionnaire to candidates asking questions of significance to Kona coffee farmers. The responses will be reported on the website in early September.

Questions include candidates' attitudes towards reforming the Kona Blend Statute, Country of Origin Labeling, accurate Made in Hawaii labeling, protection of the Hawaii coffee crops from the inherent dangers of Green Coffee importation into Hawaii, Prohibition of Unfumigated Green Coffee imports, and a commitment to serve ONLY Hawaii grown coffee at official functions.

The Candidate Questionnaire has gone out to all candidates for seats in positions that could influence the well-being of Kona coffee - 10 in the governor race, 12 senate, 13 in House District 2, 6 State (regions 5,6,7), 7 Council (regions 6,7,8); with a request for response by August 22.

Check back in September to see how well the candidates support the issues important to coffee farmers.

VOTE!

Hawaii Island Made:

Kauai County Council has followed Maui's lead and developed a program and label for Kauai Made – products crafted on Kauai by local people using local materials. The intention is to inform tourists who want a local product to buy, and spend \$19 million a year on gifts and products. "We wanted to take advantage of this and make sure that it goes into the hands of local business" said Beth Tokioka, director of Kauai's Office of Economic Development.

Time for a Hawaii Island Made program? Exclusively for REAL Hawaiian products instead of the flawed state-wide Made in Hawaii program where only 50% of value has to be Hawaiian. 100% Kona coffee could carry the label and stand out on the shelves against Kona blends made of 90% foreign beans.

Ask your County Councilor!

The Highs & Lows of Coffee Prices

Good news for estate farmers and processors – roasted Kona coffee is selling at the premium price it deserves. For example, Starbucks is selling 100% Kona beans for \$44 a pound, Hualalai Resort for \$50 a pound, Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf for \$45 a pound, right here on the island. A survey of websites showed farm-direct prices averaging \$27 a pound.

Not such good news for cherry farmers - a quick phone survey of eight local processors showed seven of them had an identical price of \$1.05 a pound for payment same



day or within a week. Only Bayview Farms was different at \$1.20 for weekly payment (data as of August 2nd). This low price leaves cherry farmers with little choice but to work several jobs to make ends meet. How is it justified when roasted Kona is commanding its true premium price? And why still so low year after year with no significant increase?

And a confirmation of what we suspected about the effect on pricing of GM coffee. The USDA website reports that consumers' willingness to pay for a food product decreases when its label indicates that the product or some of its ingredients are genetically modified (GM). Consumers discounted the GM-labeled varieties by an average of 14 percent. Gender, income, and other demographic characteristics appeared to have only a slight impact on consumers' willingness to pay for biotech foods.

Disney Offers Honest Choices

Disney's Polynesian Resort in Orlando has a casual dining spot called Kona Café. And the restaurant has a wonderful description, ***"The aroma of Kona coffee, one of the richest coffees in the world, wafts through the air. Kona coffee comes from one of the most fertile regions in Hawaii; the green coffee beans are flown to Central Florida, and then roasted to produce the house blend. Beans are ground to order throughout the day."***

The menu offers Kona Blend coffee at \$2.59, and 100% Kona Press Pots at \$6.99.



Well done Disney, we appreciate the compliment, and your strategy in importing green beans direct to make your own house blend, yet offering 100% Kona to those with discerning palates so they can appreciate the difference.

Decaffeinate Coffee One Cup At A Time

The US-based DeCaf Company says it is ready to license newly developed polymers that can be used to control or remove caffeine content in beverages as they are served. The polymers, known officially as molecularly imprinted polymers or MIPS, can be attached to either a stirrer or cup. When used in a cup of coffee the MIPS then bind caffeine molecules to them, removing them from the drink itself. DeCaf said a few stirs could cut caffeine by up to 70 per cent.

This would open up a whole new market for small producers of Kona coffee who currently don't have the volume to warrant the regular decaf process. And Kona coffee that is decaffeinated on the mainland and brought back to Hawaii for roasting has to

go through methyl bromide fumigation, a cancer-causing agent and ozone-depleter, which also destroys any claim to organic certification.

Sell the stirrers right next to the coffee, and let consumers buy high quality coffee without the loss of quality that decaffeination normally produces.

New Technology May Make GMO Obsolete

New cutting edge technology has made gene splicing and transgenic crops not only obsolete but a serious impediment to scientific progress, some scientists believe. Genomics researchers call the technology Marker Assisted Selection (MAS). MAS offers a sophisticated method to greatly accelerate classical breeding which many scientists believe will eventually replace GM food.

Instead of splicing genes from an unrelated species into the genome of a food crop to increase yield, resist pests, or improve nutrition, scientists are using MAS to locate desired traits in other varieties or wild relatives of a particular food crop, then cross breeding those plants with the existing commercial varieties to improve the crop. There is still much work to be done before it can be determined if the process will provide true beneficial results, but it is worth watching.

For details on the technology, read the article published on July 6, 2006 by Jeremy Rifkin "Beyond GM Food: New Cutting Edge MAS Technology Makes GM Food Obsolete" at <http://www.commondreams.org/views06/0706-21.htm>

Coffee Certification Rules

For those who certify their green coffee, the HDoA have sent out letters with their requirements. If you have not certified before you may not get the letters, so here, briefly, are things you should be aware of. All applicants who want their coffee certified as "Kona" must submit documentation verifying the origin of their coffee PRIOR to certification or it will be certified "Hawaiian".

If you wish to certify for ORIGIN ONLY your coffee must be labeled PRIME no matter what grade it is. If the inspector suspects that the coffee would not meet Prime, they will conduct a Full Grade Certification, costing around \$124. If one of your lots fails the grade standard, you will have to submit your next five lots of coffee for Full Grade Certification before you will be allowed to submit one for Origin Only again.

For full rules and clarification, contact Shawn at shawn.slocum@usda.gov or call 808-832-0713.

Jamaica Blend!

Just as we hold up Jamaica as a model to follow for 100% origin coffee, we learn from their official website that they are producing a BLEND....

Ah, but wait a minute, it seems Jamaica understands what the word "blend" means in the public's mind – they are blending 30% Jamaica Blue Mountain with 70% Jamaica High Mountain to produce a Jamaica Blend that is 100% Jamaican and only Jamaican.

An informal survey of folks looking at coffee in Walmart showed that buyers think "Kona Blend" when sold in packages in Kona means a blend of Kona coffees from different Kona farms, and were shocked when it was pointed out to them the fine print showing 10% Kona only.

Why can't blenders in Hawaii be as honest as those in Jamaica, and call their blend with only 10% Kona in it by a name that doesn't confuse the consumer?



If there was such a thing as a 10% Guatemalan blend, how much Kona would be in the other 90%?

Membership Information

The Kona Coffee Farmers Association was founded to protect and promote 100% Kona coffee, and to support and provide an independent voice to the farmers who grow Kona coffee.

With nearly 90 members, we are a member-driven organization and encourage member input at all times. KCFA holds quarterly meetings each year specifically for member communications. You can also contact any of the KCFA directors and voice your concerns.

Only farmers are allowed voting privileges in KCFA elections. Only farmers can be elected to the KCFA Board of Directors.

The Kona Coffee Farmers Association's goals are to help all of our member farmers succeed in their farming business and enjoy participating in an organization that represents their interests. Tell a friend.

**Membership Information:
Learn more and join us online.
www.konacoffeefarmers.com**