

Interisland Movement of Invasive Species

HENA
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Introduction paragraph

Last year, several draconian measures were introduced to prevent interisland spread of invasive species. Our industry strongly argued against these measures because we felt they would tremendously hurt our industry without much benefit to stopping the spread of invasive species. Invasive species move via passengers and cargo. Unless the problem is addressed comprehensively, invasive species will remain a problem.

We are very frustrated because the industry had worked with the Department of Agriculture to develop the Biosecurity program. Under past administrations, we worked together on solutions, one of which was to stop the introduction of pests into Hawaii in the first place. We learned that similar to produce, most of the flowers were imported rather than grown in the State and that these foreign importations from Europe, South and Central America were bringing in insects, but more importantly diseases that would devastate our farms and forests. If we could build our industry, we could lower the amount of flowers imported and reduce the risk of bringing in lethal plant diseases. Instead bill introductions focused on closing our ability to provide for local production and have the few inspectors focus on interisland rather than on imports. That becomes important when you realize that just as much cargo is moving between the islands as being imported into the State. So where do you focus the plant quarantine inspectors: preventing new invasive species or monitoring the cargo moving between the islands.

We want to stress to our legislators that the old plans were working. -- that we can be part of the solution. We can provide clean material. Let us get back to the biosecurity that we helped establish and work on import replacement of high-risk imports and pest management projects to reduce the invasive species that are here. We need to work on quarantine treatments and bringing technology back into crop production. We need to have access to treatment facilities at our farms and ports. Together, we can reduce the introduction and spread of invasive species without placing draconian measures on the industry.

Exports

The continuation of the Biosecurity program is very important to us as the core of the program is based on quarantine. For us that means, the program strives to prevent the introduction of new pests, control of introduced pests, and to facilitate the export of our crops. When Plant Quarantine developed the Biosecurity Program, the Branch expanded their regulatory role from simply regulatory and being reactive to being pro-active and collaborating with the industry.

We experienced how successful the new programming was when California threatened our industry with an embargo on all the certified nurseries. Within a week, the ~~past~~ ^{past} manager put in new certification program to allow exports to the rest of the United States

and her staff worked to resolve the nematode issue. Plant Quarantine worked fast and was responsive and prevented the downfall of our industry. PQ put in pest management plans and worked to obtain federal and state monies to fund the project. The first pest management project worked on potted nursery plants and the results were amazing as it drastically reduced the amount of infestation in production areas. Because of that success, we wanted to expand that effort to cut flowers and foliage, vegetable and herbs, and fruit and nuts.

Export does not only return money to the State. It also allows agriculture to expand by increasing available markets and prevents the producers from going into a price-war which kills the producers. *if we only sold Locally in the state.*

We need to work together again and we are hoping to have more than empty promises this year. We need the Legislators help in making the Department restart the Biosecurity program that we helped to develop. We need to have input again on programs, policies, and expenditures which makes the program more relevant and have greater impact for our industry.