HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AND STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO ASCERTAIN THE SAFETY OF REPASTEURIZED UNREFRIGERATED MILK SHIPPED TO HAWAII FROM THE MAINLAND.

WHEREAS, while there were once over 40 dairy farms in Hawaii, most of them have shut down over the past 25 years, with only Clover Leaf Dairy and Island Dairy on the Island of Hawaii still in production, and with Meadow Gold as the only remaining major milk processor; and

WHEREAS, there are many challenges to running a dairy farm in Hawaii: the negative effect of tropical heat on milk production, herd health problems, and conception concerns; the difficulty of obtaining affordable feed due to the high cost of land to produce feed crops, and high costs of transporting imported feed from the mainland; and high cost of animal waste removal; and

WHEREAS, there is a daily milk shortage of more than 40,000 gallons on Oahu, resulting in 70 to 80 percent of the milk sold in Hawaii to be shipped in from the mainland - primarily from California; and

WHEREAS, as the milk makes its way over to Hawaii, taking over a week to ship, and close to a month from milking prior to placement on the market shelves, according to the Department of Agriculture (DOA), it is stored in huge tanks that are unrefrigerated as long as the temperature at the plant is below 45 degrees, then the milk is repasteurized when it arrives in Hawaii, before it is bottled and placed on the store shelves; and

WHEREAS, an University of Hawaii study found that milk sold on Oahu exceeded federal regulatory limits for bacterial counts five days prior to expiration; and
WHEREAS, consumers frequently find that imported milk spoils before the stamped expiration date; and

WHEREAS, when the dairy industry in Hawaii was flourishing, the Milk Control Act of 1967, was established to protect the local dairy industry from the fluctuations of the market and ensure the availability of milk, and was not intended to ensure milk shipped over long distances was safe to consume; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2010, that the United States Department of Health and Human Services and State Department of Health in cooperation with DOA, are urged to determine whether milk shipped to Hawaii from the mainland in unrefrigerated bulk containers taking more than ten days, and repasteurized upon its arrival, prior to bottling:

(1) Poses any safety risks;

(2) Is safe for human consumption; and

(3) Should be further reviewed to establish whether the labeling or shipping process should be changed;

and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Director of Health, and the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture.