A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO BEGINNING FARMER TRAINING.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that it is necessary to support beginning farmers in the State by partnering with nonprofit organizations to provide training opportunities to these farmers. The legislature further finds that applicable nonprofit organizations, especially those in rural areas, lack sufficient resources to expand existing training programs. The legislature believes that a beginning farmer training program could increase farming in the State, ensure the continued use of well-developed farming methods, and provide for the cultivation of new farming methods.

The legislature acknowledges that new and aspiring farmers face a myriad of challenges, including acquiring adequate production and business knowledge and skills and accessing the tools necessary to evaluate their resources and develop feasible farming and business plans. However, the State lacks qualified farming method teachers and funding for beginning farmer training. Further, although the United State's Department of
Agriculture provides funding for beginning farmers, this funding is limited and unreliable.

The legislature believes that the future of the State's farming industry, food supply, and agriculture is reliant upon increasing and diversifying the number of new farmers in the State; introducing regenerative farming methods into the State; enhancing the long-term viability of farm businesses; utilizing and building upon existing beginning farmer training methods; providing opportunities for potential farmers who are socially or financially disadvantaged; and increasing support for beginning farmers who already own or manage a farm, and have farmed for five years or less.

Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish the beginning farmer training program to be administered by the University of Hawaii, west Oahu, sustainable community food systems.

SECTION 2. Chapter 141, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to part I, to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"§141- Beginning farmer training program; established. (a) There is established the beginning farmer training program
to be administered by the University of Hawaii, west Oahu, sustainable community food systems in conjunction with qualified farmer training providers.

(b) The University of Hawaii shall:

(1) Collaborate and consult with, and provide funding, information, and educational resources to qualified farmer training providers;

(2) Implement strategies to increase the number of new farmers in the State, with a focus on recruiting low-income persons, disabled persons, and military veterans;

(3) Assist qualified farmer training providers seeking federal and county funding to expand their training offerings;

(4) Evaluate the effectiveness of the farmer training program;

(5) Subject to the availability of funding, distribute funding to as many training programs as is practical to achieve the purpose of program; and
(6) Retain records of all activities and costs related to
the implementation of the beginning farmer training
program.

(c) A beginning farmer shall be eligible for training for
a maximum of one year; provided that the beginning farmer:

(1) Qualifies for Hawaii resident tuition or provides
proof that the beginning farmer has been farming for
no more than five years;

(2) Maintains satisfactory academic progress; and

(3) Demonstrates an interest in pursuing a career in the
State's agricultural industry.

(d) Subject to the availability of funding, the University
of Hawaii may enter into contracts with qualified farmer
training providers on a first come, first served basis to
effectuate the purpose of this section; provided that:

(1) No contract shall be more than $100,000 per year per
provider;

(2) The term of any contract shall be no longer than one
year; and
(3) No qualified farmer training provider may receive more than $300,000 in aggregate for services procured pursuant to this section during any five-year period.

(e) Training services procured pursuant to subsection (d) may include the following topics:

(1) The proper methods of:

(A) Planting, tending, cultivating, and harvesting various types of crops; and

(B) Raising livestock or poultry;

(2) Soil health;

(3) Agricultural business operations, including workforce issues, regulatory compliance, and general operations; and

(4) An industry analysis of the agricultural industry and related markets.

(f) A qualified farmer training provider providing services pursuant to this section shall make available for inspection and examination by the University of Hawaii during regular business hours all related training materials, sites, and facilities.
(g) The University of Hawaii, west Oahu, sustainable community food systems shall submit a report to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to each regular session. The report shall include at a minimum:

(1) The number of beginning farmers enrolled in the beginning farmer training program during the preceding year;

(2) A description of each qualified farming training provider;

(3) An assessment of the ability of program participants to complete project objectives and work tasks; and

(4) An evaluation of the results achieved by the program, to be written, to the extent possible, in measurable and quantifiable terms.

(h) As used in this section:

"Beginning farmer" means a person who has been farming for no more than five years and is eighteen years of age or older.

"Qualified farmer training provider" means a nonprofit organization with more than two years of experience offering farmer training programs and that is engaged in the growth, cultivation, or raising of crops, livestock, poultry, poultry
products, or dairy products; provided that this term shall not
include facilities primarily engaged in processing agricultural
products."

SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of $2,000,000 or so much
thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2020-2021 to
establish and implement the beginning farmer development
program, including payment of administration costs, staff
salaries, and expenses for contracting with outside entities.
The sum appropriated shall be expended by the University of
Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2020;
provided that section 2 of this Act shall be repealed on
June 30, 2025.
Report Title:
University of Hawaii; Beginning Farmer Training Program; Appropriation

Description:
Establishes a 5-year beginning farmer training program to be administered by the University of Hawaii West Oahu Sustainable Community Food Systems. Makes an appropriation. (SD1)

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