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Aloha Kaua'i Community Members:

Re: Kaua'i Agricultural Good Neighbor Program

The Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) is requesting your participation in a re-evaluation of the Kaua'i Agricultural Good Neighbor Program (Good Neighbor Program or GNP). HDOA launched the Good Neighbor Program in December 2013 in response to the debate concerning genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and pesticides. The Good Neighbor Program was designed as a voluntary program that includes standards and guidelines for restricted use pesticides (RUPs). The program also created a database to provide the public with information about the application and use of RUPs by participating farms.

Several companies agreed to participate in the Good Neighbor Program. In 2015, HDOA asked the non-profit Environmental Mediation Center (EMC) to conduct an evaluation of the program. The evaluation team interviewed representatives from participating companies, neighboring residents, school and medical-facility officials, and other interested members of the community. The EMC prepared and issued a report containing a series of recommendations.

In 2018, the Hawai'i Legislature passed Act 45 which requires all RUP applicators in the state to report their RUP usage to HDOA at the end of each calendar year. Act 45 also requires HDOA to produce a summary, by county, of such RUP usage, and requires that this information be made available for public review.

HDOA has contracted with the EMC to re-evaluate the Good Neighbor Program in light of the requirements of Act 45. The primary goal of this project is to gather information about the success or failure of the program, offer suggestions for improvement, and determine whether current best management practices can be incorporated into the GNP.

The EMC will schedule interviews and focus group meetings to hear feedback about the program. EMC will establish a webpage at (www.emcenter.org) that will include information about the evaluation and how to participate, including an online survey. HDOA appreciates your participation in the evaluation. Your input will help determine the future of the Good Neighbor Program.

Sincerely,

Phyllis Shimabukuro-Geiser
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

