



*Friends of Old Maui High School*  
P.O. Box 792165 Paia, Maui, Hawai'i 96779

## PARTNER ORGANIZATION LETTER

May 10, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

I am honored to have the opportunity to write in support of Malamalama Farm & Center at Kolealea in Ha'iku, Maui, Hawaii.

Malamalama Farm is uniquely poised to support the rebirth of community agriculture on the island of Maui. While efforts have begun to encourage small agriculture operations and to make farming opportunities available to our youth, a key component of successful agricultural renaissance has been largely ignored – the establishment of cooperative associations to assist farmers and to create viable markets for their products. This omission has been a significant factor in the inability of local growers to make a major impact on the food supply chain on Maui.

Hawaii will always be the most geographically remote land mass on the planet. Because of this, we are brutally aware of the need for preparedness in the event of natural disaster or global crisis. The Central Pacific Hurricane Center, the Tsunami Warning System and the local Civil Defense offices are but a few examples of our preparation for events that might cut us off from supply chains that sustain us. We expect that, in the event of an emergency, other states and countries will send aid to assist in our survival and recovery.

But what if the help does not (or cannot) come?

The oil market chaos of the past 18 months reminds us that our expectation that fuel will always be readily available to power a rescue operation may be misplaced. The assumption of limitless availability is now less certain than it has been in the past. And that means that food security is more critical than ever.

We can achieve food security in two ways. First, we can stockpile food to last for the length of a crisis. If new supplies are two weeks out, this solution might work. But if help is two months, four months or even a year away, stockpiling is not a viable approach, and can't be made viable. There simply is not nearly enough warehouse space and cooler capacity to store food for more than a million people for the long term.

The second (and logical) alternative is to develop the capacity to grow enough food locally to meet the needs of the population. This approach requires the dedication of sufficient land to agriculture, the training of skilled agriculture workers to grow the food, the availability of warehouse and cooler facilities needed for near-term management of the product, and a vibrant distribution system which will make locally-grown foods readily available to consumers.

On Maui, the decision of HC&S to cease sugar cane production, while a near-term challenge for the economy and hundreds of displaced workers, creates a rare opportunity to develop a community of small farms to grow locally the products that we now import. There is land and water available for these operations, and an excitement in the agricultural community about the opportunities that this event creates. A new generation of young farmers awaits a decision on the fate of the HC&S land.

But while our farmers have the expertise and the desire to provide locally grown products to the Maui community, they lack an important component on their road to success – a cohesive plan to create markets for their products and a cooperative structure among farmers to assure that production matches demand so that their products can be sold profitably.

This is a major component of the mission of Malamalama.

The development of a vibrant system of local farms in the present makes that system available to sustain the population when (and if) the supply chain is disrupted. It also provides local produce which is fresh and nutritious -- not picked before maturity in order to survive months of transport. It provides a sustainable system of land management, provides employment and training opportunities for our youth, and honors the history and practices of the host culture.

Malamalama Farm & Center is at the center of this effort. They have demonstrated that a committed workforce, laboring together, can make a difference in the community. Malamalama has the support of its volunteers, loyal alumni and the community at large.

Malamalama's director, Sylvia Cenzano, is an inspirational teacher and facilitator. Her dedication to sustainability and organic farming is well-known and respected throughout the community. She is a leading force in the movement to develop a connected and cooperative farm community on our small island.

I commit to participating in and supporting the 2016 “The Wholesome Truth of Food and Family – Community Empowerment for Local Foods Sustainability” project, for the time period of September 30, 2016 to September 29, 2019 in the following ways:

1. I will contribute written and video content during the initial phase of taping for the youth films for informational and educational purposes. This content will be directed toward food producers as well as consumers.

2. I will view the proposed videos and other material for the LocalFoodsMaui website and offer consulting services on an on-going basis to monitor accuracy of information that is within my field of expertise.

Our organization and its individuals participating in the project will abide by the management plan contained in the application.

Please support Malamalama Farm & Center, our Maui community, and the health and spirit of its people.

With aloha,



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